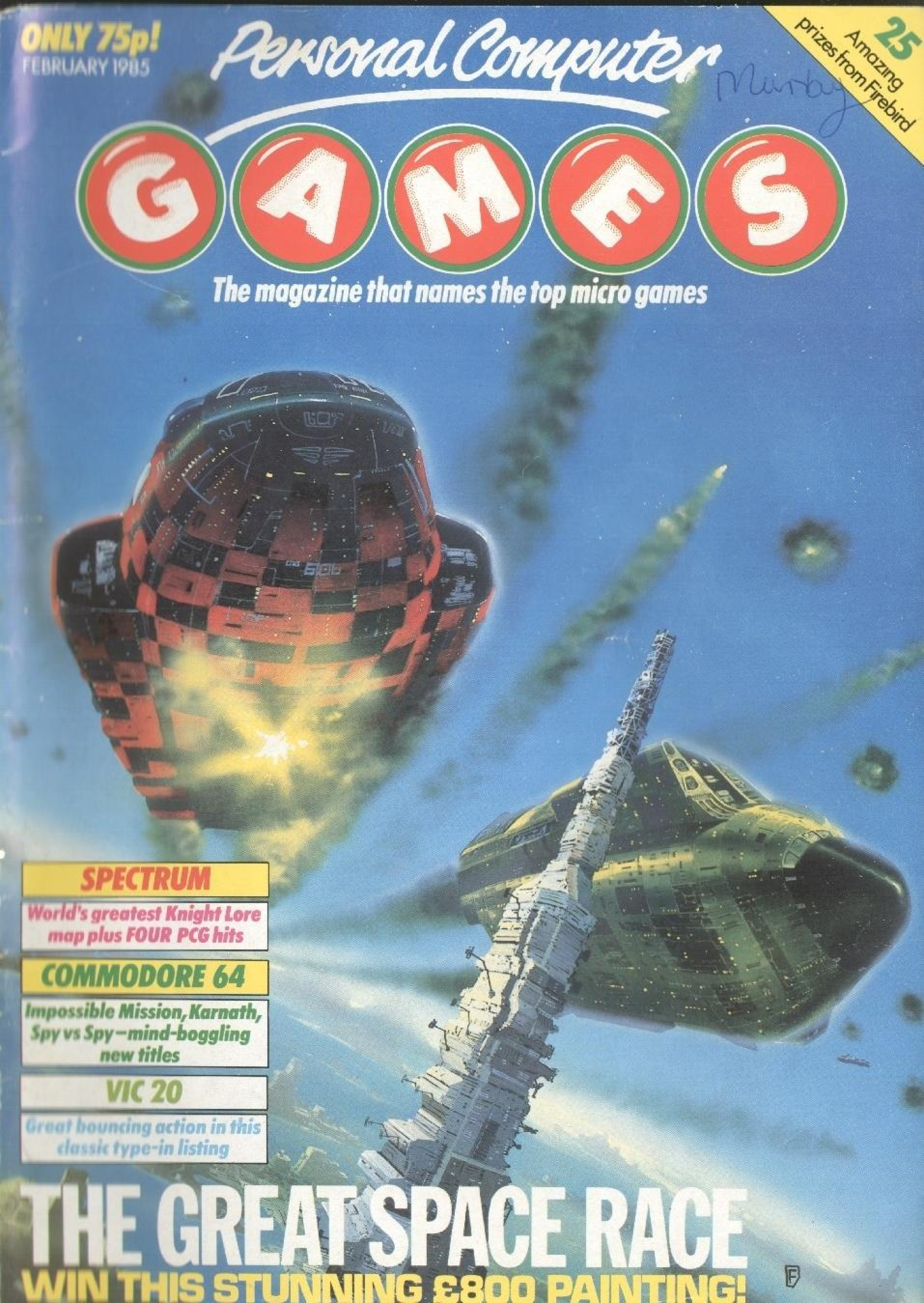
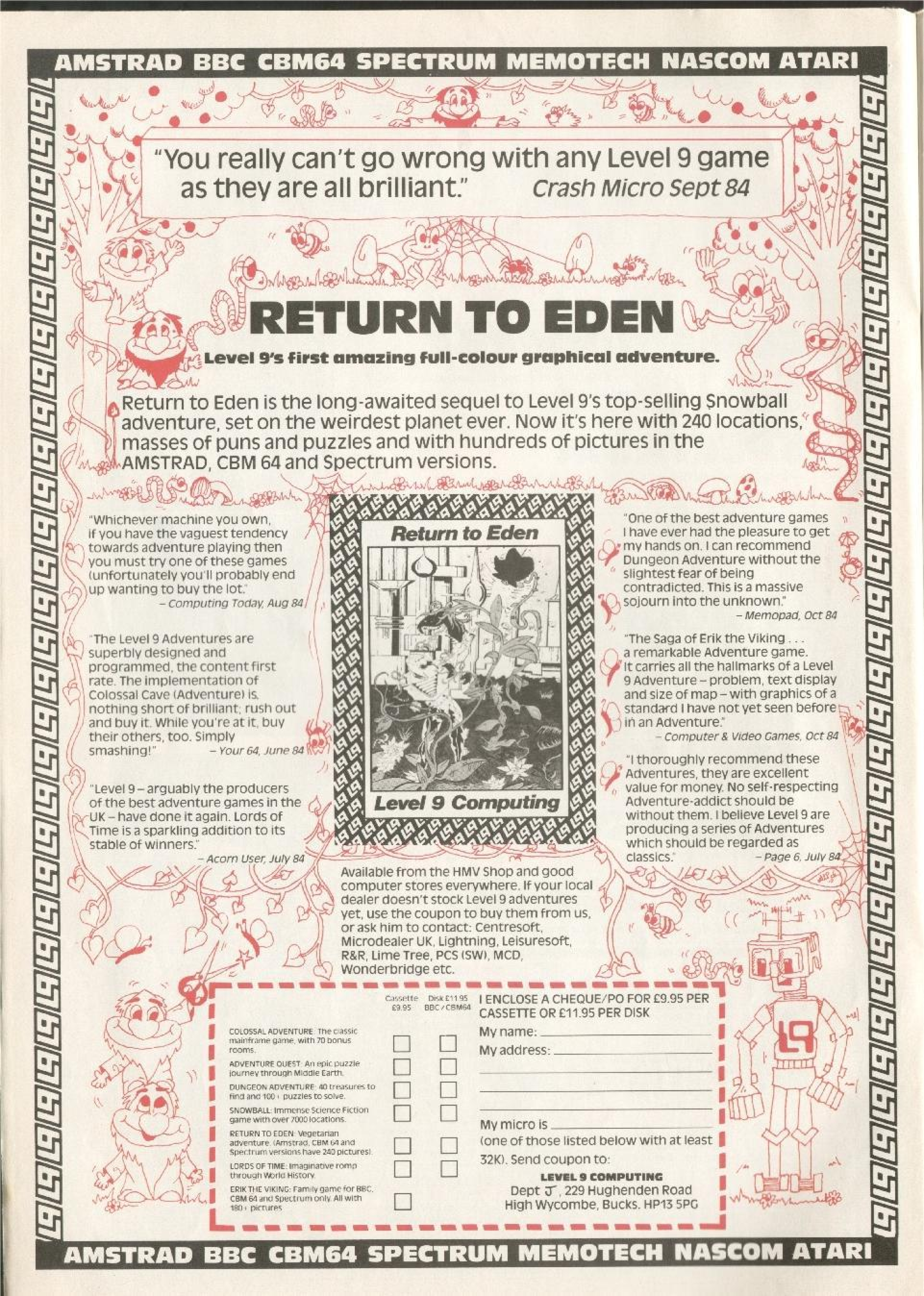

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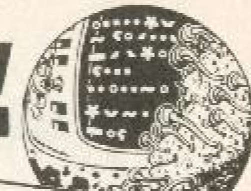
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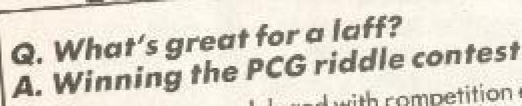




Robin McKechnie, Glasgow

Fill this space

We'd like your contribution on our notice-board – original cartoons, newspaper cuttings on a micro theme, computer jokes and riddles. If we publish yours you'll win a mystery piece of software for your micro. Come on...make us laugh!



P Darby, Huntingdon

Energy comp

Those of you chewing your nails, wondering whether you've won the £1,000 first prize in our great energy competition are going to have to chew a little longer. We had a large stack of entries and judging them is proving a lengthy process. We do however hope to have the results next issue.

Dear Readers

PCG was launched as a monthly magazine one year ago. That first issue brings back some entertaining memories. It included an interview I had with Paul Daniels which our subsequent research showed had gone down like a lead balloon. Also 15 pages of program listings, a hardware review of the Memotech, an appalling cover illustration and a page on The Hobbit carefully printed so that no one could read it! There was even a letter in Byte-Back written (and signed) by me, since no one else had written to us at that stage.

Even so, the issue brought a stack of rave responses and since then PCG's moved from strength to strength. Probably the most significant change has been replacing some of the listings with our Tricks 'n Tactics section to help you get more enjoyment out of the games you already own.

One thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to being the best source of games reviews in the known universe. Our introduction of the PCG panel a few months ago further strengthened that position.

And the next 12 months? Ah, anything could happen. We might do something dramatic about program listings. The Union might conquer Helix and blow The Final Conflict off the back of the mag. Space devoted to Amstrad and MSX machines might start to grow.

Whatever happens, one thing's for sure. We're determined to go on making PCG the magazine you want it to be.

See you next Feb.

Chris Anderson & the PCG team

Q. What's great for a laff?
A. Winning the PCG riddle contest

Once again we were deluged with competition entries from people trying to win a year's free membership of the Software Club and get a great free game every month. You had to give us three riddles, and some of them were AWFUL, they really were.

The 25 winning entries were so painful we've hardly recovered. We can't possibly print all 75 riddles in one go for fear of doing you all severe damage. But here are a few to be going on with. More next month.

Q. What do you call a mistake in Decathlon?
A. A Zola Bug.

Q. What's a BBC owner's favourite group?
A. Frakie Goes to Hollywood.
(Craig Paterson, High Wycombe, Bucks)

Q. What does Manic Miner wear on his feet?
A. Jet Set Wellies.

Q. What is Trashman's favourite singer?
A. Bin Crosby.
(Geoff Dagger, Blackburn)

Q. What do you call a dark brown wild dog with a blue rosette?
A. Koko-tory wulf.

Q. What do you call the fear of Oric computers?
A. Atmos fear.
(Paul Davies, Barnsley)

Q. What does a prehistoric man use to beat his pillow?
A. A software club.
(David Law, Colwyn Bay, N Wales)

Q. What do you get if you cross Trashman with a bicycle pump?
A. A dustman who puts the wind up the residents.

Q. What do you call a Roman flight simulator?
A. Pontius Pilot.
(G Thorne, Tunbridge Wells, Kent)

Q. Where do space invaders leave their space ships?
A. At parking meteors.

Q. What do you feed an undernourished Elrond?
A. Elf raising flour.

Q. What goes black-white-black-white-black-white?
A. A ZX81 rolling down a hill.
(James Hall, London)

Q. What do computers use to clean their teeth?
A. Tandy floss.

Q. What does a Potty Pigeon produce?
A. Strangepoop.

Q. What do you get if you mix Kong and Pengo?
A. Chiller Gorrilla.
(M Griffiths, Poole, Dorset)

Q. What does a wally look for in MSX?
A. The pedals.

Q. How do you describe cattle choking?
A. Bull throttle.
(J Singh, Telford, Shropshire)

The other winners are:
Claudio Testa, Luton; Gianfranco Manini, Glasgow; Michael Scott, Glasgow; Sam Hodson, Cowbridge; Anthony Smith, Leeds; Christopher McLean, Cheshire; Geraint John, Eastleigh; Andy Higgs, Purley; Christopher Rose, Linton; Andy Clarke, Atherstone; C A Pain, St Albans; Martin Allen, Sheffield; David Buckmaster, Kennington; Will Palin, London; Anon, Leigh-on-Sea; S Folland, Bristol.

£50 for hit listings

Here at PCG we're always on the lookout for top-quality listings to publish in Program Library. What's more, we pay a hefty £50 for the ones we publish ... Just send us your game on cassette for evaluation. You MUST also include your name, address, and phone number (if you've got one); a written or (preferably) printed listing of the program; some notes on how the program works; and an s.a.e if you want the cassette returned. You must also include a signed declaration that the program is your own original work, and that it has not been submitted to any other publication.

Well?? What are you waiting for??

NEW RELEASES

MIRAGE TRIO

Mirage software are a new company with three new games, on four machines.

Counts Castle is an arcade adventure for the Commodore 64 which is compatible with the Currah Speech 64 and will retail for £5.95. *Hurrah Henry* is a 3D adventure with 30 screens for the Commodore 16 and Plus 4. *Castle Greyskull* will be for the Spectrum 48K and is also a 3D adventure selling for £5.95.

MATCH POINT 64

Psion's ace Spectrum tennis game *Match Point* has been converted for the Commodore 64 and is in the shops now. The game has all the features of its Spectrum forerunner, with a 3D display and virtually all the shots of the real thing.

On the BBC, Psion are releasing a new arcade game – *Statix*. Players have to outsmart dangerous electric charges and eventually gain control of the whole screen. Both *Match Point* and *Statix* cost £7.95.

MORE YANKWARE

Ariolasoft are another new company marketing US games in the UK. Their first 12 games are all for the Commodore 64 and were originally written by Broderbund or Electronic Arts in the States.

Amongst the range are two former US number ones *Choplifter* and *Lode Runner*, plus *Spelunker, David's Midnight Magic, Raid on Bungeling Bay, Hard Hat Mack, One-on-One* and *Realm of Impossibility* for £9.95 on cassette and £12.95 on disk. Four other games *Operation Whirlwind, Murder on the Zinderneuf, Archon* and *MULE* cost £2.00 more on both cassette and disk.

Each game released before May will contain a free voucher for hardware discounts.

WILLY THE WONDER OF '84

Here they are, the biggest selling games of 1984, specially compiled for PCG.

Several of the titles stand out from the rest as big sellers on more than one machine. The real monsters were *Jet Set Willy* and *Daley's Decathlon* on the Spectrum and '64, while *Hunchback* appears on four of the charts. *Manic Miner, The Hobbit, Football Manager* and *Elite* also made large waves although some of the games released later in the year have not had time to make inroads into the year's figures.

The *Cuthbert* games and *Chuckie Egg* were ahead on the Dragon while US Gold dominated the Atari scene with *Zaxxon* leading the way. On the Vic 20 *The Wizard and Princess* held off a late challenge from *Perils of Willy*, and on the Oric, *Harrier Attack* was the year's biggie.

Ultimate only appear via *Sabre Wulf* and *Jet Pac*, but their current releases are rapidly redressing that and may well dominate next year's charts.

These lists were compiled for us by RAM/C the company which works out our monthly charts. They cover sales up to the beginning of December, 1984.

SPECTRUM

1.	JET SET WILLY	SOFTWARE PROJECTS
2.	DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON	OCEAN
3.	MANIC MINER	SOFTWARE PROJECTS
4.	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE GAMES
5.	CHEQUERED FLAG	PSION
6.	HUNCHBACK	OCEAN
7.	SABRE WULF	ULTIMATE
8.	FIGHTER PILOT	DIGITAL INTEGRATION
9.	HOBBIT	MELBOURNE HOUSE
10.	FULL THROTTLE	MICROMEGA

COMMODORE 64

1.	BEACH HEAD	US GOLD
2.	DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON	OCEAN
3.	INTERNATIONAL SOCCER	COMMODORE
4.	FLIGHT 737	ANIROG
5.	MANIC MINER	SOFTWARE PROJECTS
6.	HUNCHBACK	OCEAN
7.	HOBBIT	MELBOURNE HOUSE
8.	MONTY MOLE	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
9.	JET SET WILLY	SOFTWARE PROJECTS
10.	SOLO FLIGHT	US GOLD

DRAGON

1.	CUTHBERT (Series)	MICRODEAL
2.	CHUCKIE EGG	A&F
3.	THE KING	MICRODEAL
4.	RING OF DARKNESS	WINTERSOFT
5.	HUNCHBACK	OCEAN
6.	HUNGRY HORACE	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7.	FROGGER	MICRODEAL
8.	UGH	SOFTEK
9.	KRIEGSPEIL	BEYOND
10.	SPACE SHUTTLE	MICRODEAL

ATARI

1.	ZAXXON	US GOLD
2.	CAVERNS OF KHAFKA	COSMI
3.	POLE POSITION	ATARI
4.	SOLO FLIGHT	US GOLD
5.	FORBIDDEN FOREST	COSMI
6.	ENCOUNTER	NOVAGEN
7.	BRUCE LEE	US GOLD
8.	INCREDIBLE HULK	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
9.	RALLEY SPEEDWAY	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
10.	O' RILEY'S MINE	DATASOFT

BBC B

1.	ELITE	ACORNSOFT
2.	AVIATOR	ACORNSOFT
3.	FRAK!	AARDVARK
4.	FORTRESS	AMCOM
5.	MICRO OLYMPICS	DATABASE
6.	CHESS	various
7.	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE GAMES
8.	JET PAC	ULTIMATE
9.	KILLER GORILLA	MICROPOWER
10.	3D BOMB ALLEY	SOFT INVASION

VIC 20

1.	WIZARD & PRINCESS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2.	PERILS OF WILLY	SOFTWARE PROJECTS
3.	CHARIOT RACE	MICRO ANTICS
4.	CRAZY KONG	INTERCEPTOR
5.	FLIGHT 737	ANIROG
6.	JET PAC	ULTIMATE
7.	SNOOKER	VISIONS
8.	COMPUTER WAR	THORN EMI
9.	M.L.B.A.T.E.T.	LLAMASOFT
10.	VEGAS JACKPOT	MASTERTRONICS

ORIC

1.	HARRIER ATTACK	DURELL
2.	HUNCHBACK	OCEAN
3.	HOBBIT	MELBOURNE HOUSE
4.	SCUBA DIVE	DURELL
5.	DRACULA'S REVENGE	SOFTEK

ELECTRON

1.	ELITE	ACORNSOFT
2.	MICRO OLYMPICS	DATABASE
3.	BLAGGER	ALLIGATA
4.	737 FLIGHT SIMULATOR	SALAMANDER
5.	CHUCKIE EGG	A&F



COLECO JOYSTICK COMPETITION WINNERS

There's some snazzy zapping ahead for the winners of November's sci-fi joystick comp.

G Thorne, Wells; **Fred Yound**, Dundee; **A R Burton**, Fleet; **M D Fletcher**, Chipping Norton; **Robert Borthwick**, Harpenden; **Theo Cohen**, Finchley; **Gordon Love**, London; **Paul Burton**, Durham; **Nathan Barnett**, Cumbria; **Jason Ashton**, Sheffield; **Christopher Rose**, Cambs; **Gerald Page**, N Baddesley; **Justin Benn**, London; **Michael Jones**, Lancs; **Michael Bowditch**, Yeovil; **Ian Sturgeon**, Suffolk; **Julian Hammond**, Herts; **Paul Haslam**, Bradford; **N Fox**, Chelmsford; **B M Chan**, Burnley; **Darren Crawley**, N Ireland; **Nigel Hood**, Dereham; **Mrs D M Price**, Cornwall; **Neil Pearson**, Worthing; **Martin Speller**, St Ives.





FRANKIE GOES ADVENTURING

You've heard the records, worn the t-shirts and, now, you can play the micro game – Ocean have signed a deal to produce the first Frankie Goes To Hollywood computer program.

The game is expected to be some kind of adventure with music, but details have yet to be finalised. 'It's still in its embryonic stages', said Rob Partridge of Island Records, one of the partners in the project.

The game is expected to be available in the spring for both Spectrum and Commodore 64, and should sell for around £10.

INSIDE MI5

Frederick Forsyth's best-selling spy novel The Fourth Protocol is to be produced as an adventure game by Hutchinson Computer Publishing.

It's due to appear in late spring and should cost around £9. There will be three main episodes, each of which will end with an arcade sequence.

The player takes the role of the book's hero and begins the game sitting at his computer in MI5 headquarters. From then on it's a battle against all sorts of evil enemy agents.

The game will be released simultaneously on the Commodore 64 and the Spectrum.

NEW BEEBSTICK

Kempston have introduced a BBC joystick to their range of micro add-ons. The BBC joystick is similar in appearance to the Competition Pro and plugs directly into the Beeb's analogue port. It costs £16.95.

NEW UNMUSICAL EXPRESS

That prolific programmer Tony Crowther has produced two games for his new company Wizard, which will be sold through a deal with Quicksilva.

Black Thunder is very similar to *Suicide Express*, the changes being that the vehicle is a car and not a train and the music is worse. The game is available now for the Commodore 64 and retails for £7.95 on cassette and £12.95 on disk.

Also being released under the Quicksilva name is a game called *Gryphon* which features said mythical beast in another scrolling shoot-'em-up. You have to collect gold bars amidst the nasties and the detailed graphic scenery.

NEW CYLON ATTACK

Cylon Attack, A&F's successful 30 space blast, so far only available on the BBC and Commodore 64, is now available on the Sinclair Spectrum. The Spectrum version is called *New Cylon Attack*, and contains features not found in its predecessors, such as animated background graphics and a greater diversity of enemy ships.

TRAMIEL TALKS TOUGH

Here it is, the face which is striking fear into Commodore and prompting talk of a massive Atari revival. It belongs to chunky, fast-talking Jack Tramiel who left Commodore to buy up its ailing American rival and has now thrown into motion a dramatic action plan for 1985.



Atari are to launch a range of new home computers including 64K and 128K machines which will be compatible with existing software.

The news follows hard upon yet another cut in the price of the 800XL – this time it's gone down from £169 to £129.

It all suggests that Atari, under the dynamic leadership of Tramiel, are attempting to make a big comeback in the home computer market. At a recent London press conference Tramiel claimed he had already cut costs at Atari by 50 per cent. He went on to explain his marketing strategy: 'The religion which I have is as soon as I have that saving I pass it on to the end user.

Tramiel says he wants to make 'computers for the masses' and insists that 'computers are fun'. So what about games?

The only new release Atari were willing to confirm for early 1985 was *Atari Pay Off*, a graphic adventure which will be available on cartridge.

ELITE ON SPEC

Spectrum owners will soon be able to get their paws on *Elite*, the hit BBC game, now that Firebird have snapped up the Z80 rights to the game.

Firebird hope to change the game as little as possible in converting it and predict that the Spectrum version will be in the shops by late spring. An Amstrad version should be available shortly after. Firebird have not yet committed themselves to producing an MSX version.

Viper sssssslithers in

New software house Viper are beginning their campaign with two games on the BBC: *SIM* and *Ultron*.

Ultron is modestly described as 'the last word in shoot-'em-ups' while *SIM* is an arcade adventure with over 70 screens.

Viper have also acquired the rights to existing Visions titles and hope to bring out an enhanced version of Visions' *Snooker*.

HERCULES COMPETITION WINNERS

These lucky people each win a copy of the great Interdisc game.

Simon Pearson, Marlow; **Andrew Evans**, Norfolk; **Scott Weeks**, Aylesbury; **Timothy Chadwick**, Huddersfield; **Gary Sinclair**, Kent; **Jean Stewart**, Scotland; **Steven Bonner**, London; **Neil Pearson**, Worthing; **Gary Wilson**, Tyne and Wear; **Sion Gibson**, Leigh on Sea; **Leigh Sparrow**, Felixstowe; **James Gibbs**, Cannock; **Gary Brown**, Lanarkshire; **Laurence Hutchins**, Tring; **Carl Wassell**, Birmingham; **Gordon Spiers**, Barnes; **John Kavanagh**, Morden; **Shailesh Patra**, Northolt; **Mark Brewer**, Chessington; **T Goldingay**, Streetly; **Andrew Boyland**, Gwent; **Neil Cameron**, Cumbria; **Stephen Caffrey**, Birmingham; **Michael Branson**, Cardiff; **Kevin Downard**, Fife; **Roy Peters**, Clapton; **W B Bolt**, Plymouth; **C Symeon**, London; **Richard Webb**, Kempston; **Karl Wadsack**, N Fordinbridge; **Andrew McTavish**, Morayshire; **Ian Morrow**, Peel, Isle of Man; **David Farnaby**, Middlesbrough; **C J Wilkes**, Mitcham; **Adrian Bassett**, Sheffield; **R Ayrton**, Harlow; **Simon Middleditch**, Hitchin; **Mark Buckley**, Hudds; **Stephen Longworth**, Solihull; **Thomas Taylor**, Leigh; **Andy Higgs**, Purley; **Paul Haines**, Somerset; **Adrian Watson**, Stockton; **A Craig**, Glasgow; **Mark Taylor**, Essex; **Stephen Platt**, Enfield; **Nigel Brown**, Chipstead; **A J Cartwright**, Bunbury; **John Whiston**, Telford; **Lee Brown**, London.



WHISPERING HORACE

Ultimate secret

One of the unanswered questions of 1984 was: why didn't those imaginative geniuses at Ultimate ever get round to converting their Spectrum hits to the Commodore 64 and make themselves a bob or two.

Whispers have reached me that such conversions could yet arrive later this year ... but they won't be made by Ultimate. I must say no more.

Ocean v Software Projects

Very strange. All those Software Projects ads promising *Hunchback at the Olympics* and for weeks no program arrived. Ah, but I can reveal the reason for the delay. The Software Projects boys had been dragged to London's high court by Ocean who claimed rights to the Hunchback character.

Finally, Software Projects agreed to pay a hefty whack for the licensing rights, clearing the way for the game to hit the market.

Express car

Wonder programmer Tony Crowther just can't keep out of the whispering circuit. One of his new releases distributed by Quicksilva for his new company Wizard, looks astoundingly similar to *Suicide Express* which he wrote for Gremlin Graphics. In fact it's identical, except that the train has become a racing car, the music is different (less pleasant to Horace's ears), and it's called *Black Thunder*.

Surely Gremlin might take offence, or even legal action? 'I don't think so,' whispered a gremlin. 'We'll let the market give its own judgement on it. I think Quicksilva might end up with a lot of unsold copies.'

Eureka sandwich

Browsing through The Times the other day I came across a little advert that tickled my fancy. Here it is:

> **SANDWICH BOARDMAN REQUIRED**
> For the end of the world.
> Must like dogs and what they do.
> **EUREKA!**
> The No 1 computer game.
> Contact: 01-381 8373.

How strange, I thought. Why should somebody advertising a computer game need to like dogs and what they do? What *do* dogs do? The mystery was cleared up when one of those poor, underpaid scribblers on *PCG* phoned up to apply for the job. £30 for a day wearing a sandwich board in central London sounded like a good deal to him.

'But why', he asked, 'do I have to like dogs? What do I have to do with them?' 'Oh, nothing,' replied the charming young lady at the other end, 'it's just that dogs like to – er – pee on sandwich boards, don't they?'

Our impoverished journalist made his excuses and beat a hasty retreat.

Horace suspects that dogs are probably very choosy about the computer-game-advertising sandwich boards they pee on.

Exploding Beebs

Horace is all in favour of a merry jape or two, but when a joke leads to a poor defenceless computer being drowned, things have gone too far.

A BBC user magazine recently printed a piece of jocular advice to the effect that if the machine printed a certain error message you should 'Take your computer immediately to the dealer as this indicates it is about to explode.'

Now it emerges one lady gave her Beeb a good soaking before taking the sodden lump back to the dealer.

One sympathises deeply. Some magazines seem to have no sense of responsibility. But then some people seem to have no sense of humour.

Frankie goes legit

Jolly super to see my favourite pop stars, the fab Frankie, getting into computer games with Ocean. Would the game be as controversial as the records?

'Oh, no,' said the lady from Ocean's PR company, 'it won't be rude!' Why not? Horace wondered.

'Because we have to sell the game through WH Smith,' came the reply.

Hippy Minter goes psychedelic

Jeff Minter's latest offering is called *Psychedelia* and is intended to blow your mind – in the nicest possible way.

It's not exactly what you could call a game – no shooting, killing, aliens or high scores.

Minter himself describes it as 'something like an interactive fireworks display' which sounds pretty hairy, but is really a lot more peacable. 'It's a sort of light synthesiser', adds Minter. 'But it's not a game you can describe – you've really got to see it.'

Psychedelia will be available on three machines – Commodore 64, Vic 20 and Commodore 16 – at normal Llamasoft prices.

GAMES TASTING

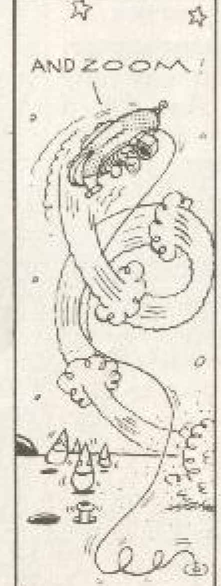
Buying a new game can be a bit of a hit and miss affair, especially if you haven't read the reviews in PCG. All too often the great new game with the technicolour cover turns out to be a big disappointment. The new shop viewing system from Racom hopes to change all this.

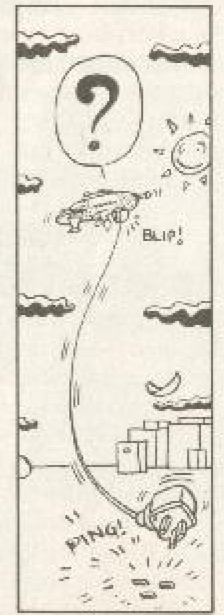
The Racom MX70 consists of a view screen and a small cabinet containing a video disc player. At the touch of a button customers will be able to see a 50 second demonstration sequence from any of up to 70 games, with sound and full-colour animated graphics. The video disc will be updated each month so that it holds the top 50 games and a selection of new releases. The system, which was in some shops before Christmas, is expected to become much more widespread during the year, allowing gamers to see before they buy.

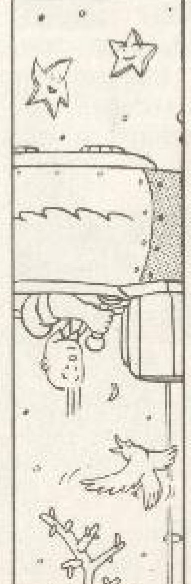
TOBY AND THE PROF

By Phil Elliot











The Fight Continues...
On The Spectrum.

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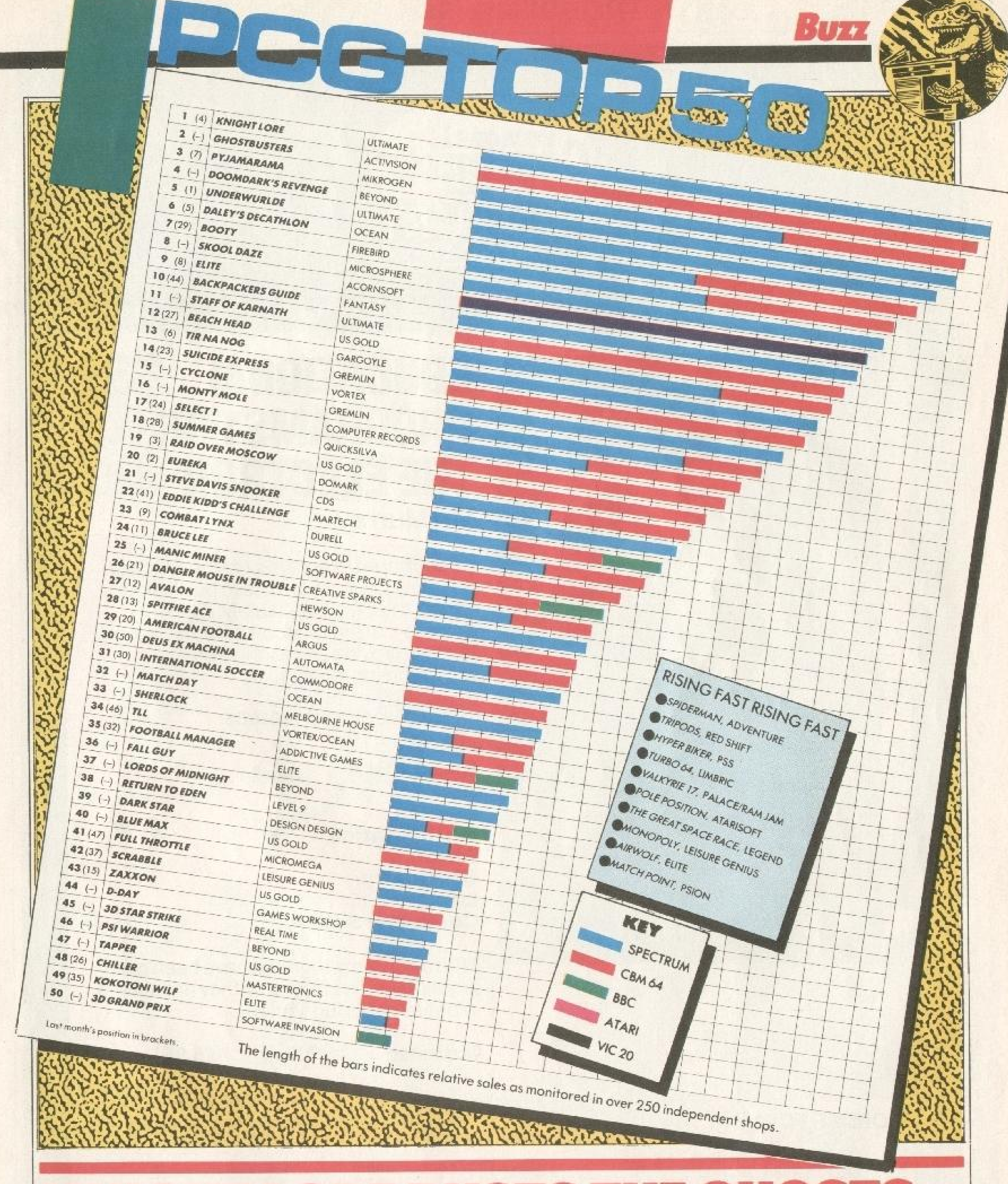
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TMS



PCG TOP 50

Pos	Last month	Title	Publisher
1	(4)	KNIGHT LORE	ULTIMATE
2	(–)	GHOSTBUSTERS	ACTIVISION
3	(7)	PYJAMARAMA	MIKROGEN
4	(–)	DOOMDARK'S REVENGE	BEYOND
5	(1)	UNDERWURLDE	ULTIMATE
6	(5)	DALEY'S DECATHLON	OCEAN
7	(29)	BOOTY	FIREBIRD
8	(–)	SKOOL DAZE	MICROSPHERE
9	(8)	ELITE	ACORNSOFT
10	(44)	BACKPACKERS GUIDE	FANTASY
11	(–)	STAFF OF KARNATH	ULTIMATE
12	(27)	BEACH HEAD	US GOLD
13	(6)	TIR NA NOG	GARGOYLE
14	(23)	SUICIDE EXPRESS	GREMLIN
15	(–)	CYCLONE	VORTEX
16	(–)	MONTY MOLE	GREMLIN
17	(24)	SELECT 1	COMPUTER RECORDS
18	(28)	SUMMER GAMES	QUICKSILVA
19	(3)	RAID OVER MOSCOW	US GOLD
20	(2)	EUREKA	DOMARK
21	(–)	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	CDS
22	(41)	EDDIE KIDD'S CHALLENGE	MARTECH
23	(9)	COMBAT LYNX	DURELL
24	(11)	BRUCE LEE	US GOLD
25	(–)	MANIC MINER	SOFTWARE PROJECTS
26	(21)	DANGER MOUSE IN TROUBLE	CREATIVE SPARKS
27	(12)	AVALON	HEWSON
28	(13)	SPITFIRE ACE	US GOLD
29	(20)	AMERICAN FOOTBALL	ARGUS
30	(50)	DEUS EX MACHINA	AUTOMATA
31	(30)	INTERNATIONAL SOCCER	COMMODORE
32	(–)	MATCH DAY	OCEAN
33	(–)	SHERLOCK	MELBOURNE HOUSE
34	(46)	TLL	VORTEX/OCEAN
35	(32)	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE GAMES
36	(–)	FALL GUY	ELITE
37	(–)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
38	(–)	RETURN TO EDEN	LEVEL 9
39	(–)	DARK STAR	DESIGN DESIGN
40	(–)	BLUE MAX	US GOLD
41	(47)	FULL THROTTLE	MICROMEGA
42	(37)	SCRABBLE	LEISURE GENIUS
43	(15)	ZAXXON	US GOLD
44	(–)	D-DAY	GAMES WORKSHOP
45	(–)	3D STAR STRIKE	REAL TIME
46	(–)	PSI WARRIOR	BEYOND
47	(–)	TAPPER	US GOLD
48	(26)	CHILLER	MASTERTRONICS
49	(35)	KOKOTONI WILF	ELITE
50	(–)	3D GRAND PRIX	SOFTWARE INVASION

The length of the bars indicates relative sales as monitored in over 250 independent shops.

KNIGHT LORE BUSTS THE GHOSTS

THE TUSSLE for the top is really fierce but despite *Ghostbusters'* strong challenge *Knight Lore* has indeed gone to number one as Ultimate predicted last month. This month they were confident enough to say 'Wait till *Alien 8* comes out, it will blow everything else away.'

Strong words indeed, but it looks like they may have company from *Ghostbusters* who have shot to number two purely on Commodore 64 sales. Activision were 'were absolutely delighted' and 'look forward to it going to number 1.' With its release on the Spectrum that's justifiable confidence.

The shake-up at the top of the charts continues with *Doomdark's Revenge, Booty, Skool Daze, Backpackers Guide* and *Staff of Karnath* all roaring up. *Pyjamarama* also continued its upward climb, while *Underwurlde* slipped to number five and *Daley's Decathlon* and *Elite* also dropped one place each.

Software Projects' classics *Jet Set Willy* and *Manic Miner* keep on yo-yoing with *JSW* disappearing but *MM* popping back with equal shares on four machines. Also benefitting from multi-machine sales is *Return to Eden* which is spread over five micros.

Next month's number one is anybody's guess – but you can bet Ultimate will be going for a hat-trick of chart toppers.

Commodore 64, available Now

POSITIVELY PRIME EVIL...

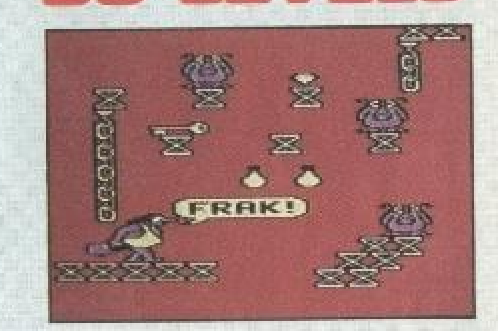
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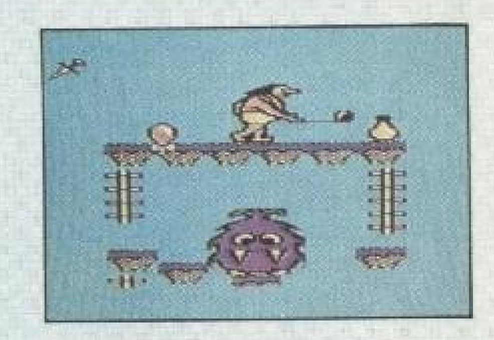


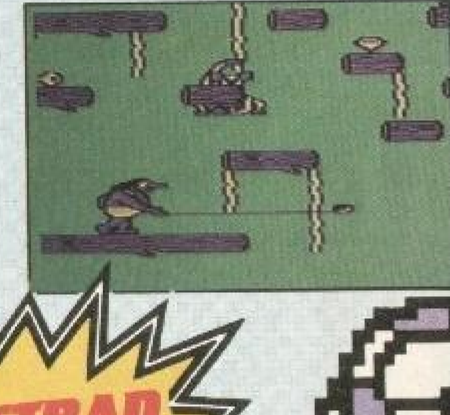
SCRUBBLY guardians, HOOTER POGLET and others will give you a hard time, and the better you are, the nastier and more unexpected the surprises in store.



96 LEVELS







FRAK!

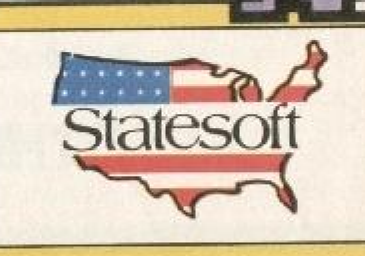
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Mistaken identity

If you sent Kremen a letter, my mum sent it back to you. She did this because that is my nickname and she does not know it.

I have only just found out she's done this. When my free mega-tape was posted this morning she said: 'They keep sending Kremen letters,' so I said, 'I am Kremen, it's my nickname,' and she told me a letter arrived for me but she'd posted it back with 'Not known at this address' on it.

If you have the letter, please send it to Chris Wellington instead of Kremen to save confusion. Sorry about this.

Chris Wellington, alias Kremen, Barkingside

No need to say sorry Kre ... Chris, it gave us all a good laugh. We'll remember to address those elusive letters properly next time, but you'd better warn your mum if you plan to use a nickname again, eh?

Pipeline unblocked

I read a couple of months ago that someone was stuck in the pipeline in *Monty Mole*. If you've not managed to get past it yet, here's how to:

On screen 15 there's a pipe coming down to the bottom of the screen. If you get on this pipe and go down to the bottom, the miner's truck just goes under your feet. Next time it comes along, you run along on top of it and jump on a pipe on the next screen.

After that, collect the coal from that screen then get back on the truck and jump off it at the end of the screen so you can land on the pipe and then collect the coal.

Miles Horne, Fordingbridge

A SAD FAREWELL

I've just changed (upgraded is not the word) from an Oric to a Spectrum, and before smart alec Spectrum owners start pointing fingers and saying 'told you so' let me make it totally clear that in my opinion the Oric is a better machine with better facilities, hardware-wise, but my opinions on the company and the firmware are unprintable, at least in a family magazine, and for risk of being sued for libel!

But, I've been in this crazy world for some years now, since before Sinclair was a household name, and while some people were still balancing yoghurt on early ZX80's. All I can say to people new to this thing is Doppy's first law: 'Software Maketh Hardware.'

The Spectrum may be a cheap and nasty piece of rubbish with a tacky keyboard (this goes for the Plus also), a lousy beeper (likewise) and colour limitations, not to mention the toytown Basic. But some of the software available for it is far superior to anything available on more expensive, better made and equipped machines (well, almost).

Take Psion's *Scrabble*, a conversion from a disk-based Apple II program to a cassette-based Spectrum program, converted and improved to a machine which costs almost ten times less than the machine the original ran on. Pretty impressive, and nice to watch as well as play.

And finally, I hope you do not fall into the same trap as some of your competitors in catering purely for a teenage readership, as that tends to be incredibly patronising to older readers, i.e. those over 20!

The Doppelganger, Dodworth

We'll carry on writing such sickeningly adult pieces as per normal, whilst the Ed concentrates on those pieces to be read by the 5's and under.

OK Doppo?

Special delivery

Thought I would drop you a line regarding an excellent service supplied by Digital Integration, who produce *Fighter Pilot* for the '64.

After securing a copy of this game from a Spectrum outlet, I found that it wouldn't load, so I rushed back to the shop who informed me that it was their last copy. Desperation! I'd purchased the tape as a birthday present for my son.

So, unimpressed by all this I phoned Digital Integration, who immediately offered to send a copy first class post. I pointed out that this was very good of them, but there was an excellent chance it would not arrive on time, since the following day was a Saturday. They then supplied me with a handful of Spectrum dealers to telephone, none of whom were particularly helpful.

After many phone calls I still couldn't secure a replacement and once again phoned DI. 'Where do you live?' they asked. 'We have a programmer who goes through Waterloo. He could meet you.'

Fortunately, I live close to Waterloo, arranged the meeting and was able to produce the birthday present on time with Best Wishes from Digital Integration.

Mr R Sharp, London

Initial confusion

What I'm writing to tell you is that the initials of my rugby teacher are JSW. I can just see Miner Willy leaping from platform to platform throwing rugby balls at the nasties!

Benjamin Bowden, Leicester

I'm sure your poor rugby teacher's had to put up with a lot of stick from you lot about it. But what else does BB stand for?

Nasty bugs

Who do Software Projects think they are? Here I am, a proud owner of a Commodore 64, laughing at puny little Spectrum owners, because their programs are so bug ridden – mostly at the notorious *Jet Set Willy* and its Attic bug.

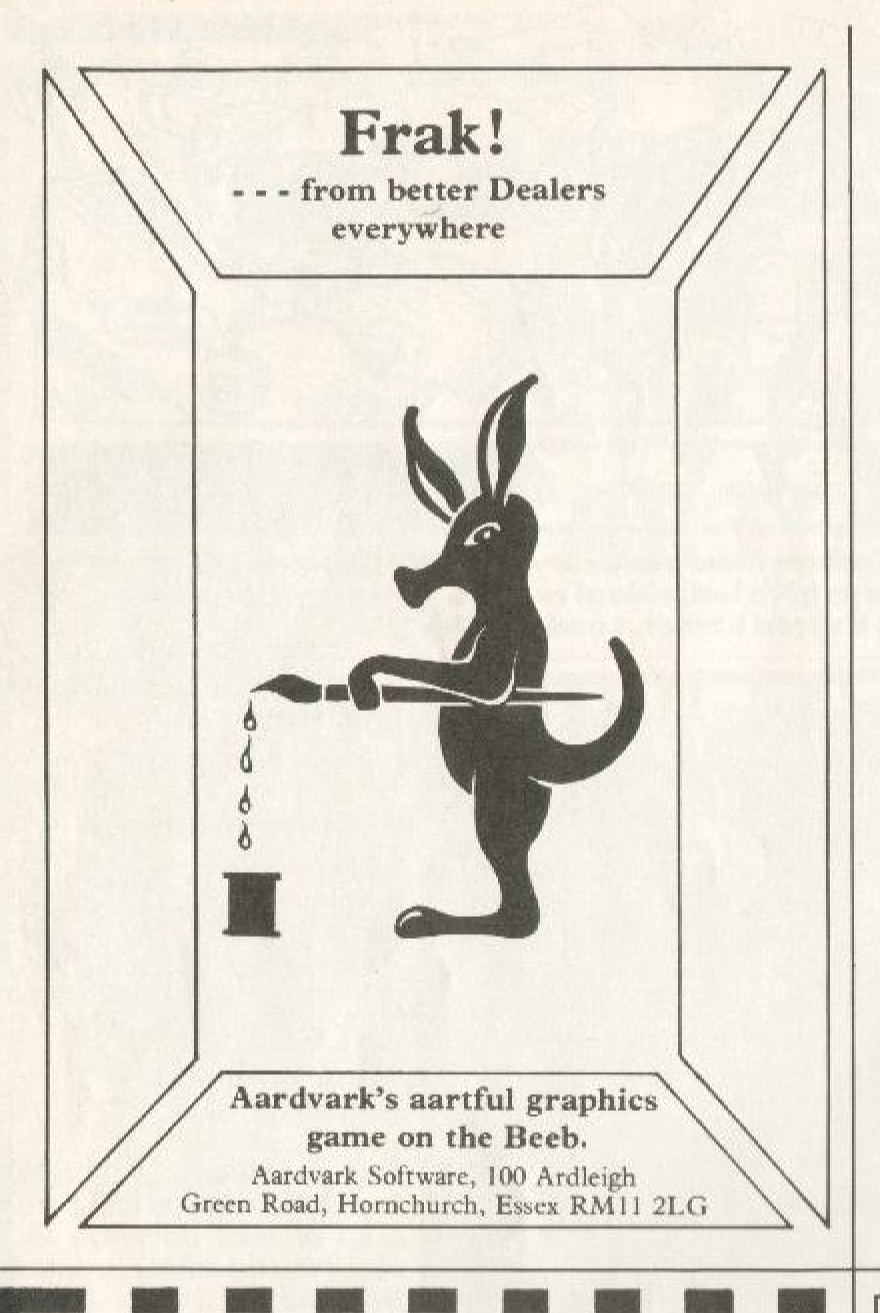
I tell my Spectrum-owning friends that C64 programs are faultless, but what happens? You've guessed it, SP replace *JSW* on my machine, and I find to my sheer horror and disbelief that the C64 version is also impossible to finish. Not due to the Attic this time, but the Wine Cellar. Yes, that's right, you can't get to all the objects.

Someone should do something about these fiends. I've wasted my breath, but most of all, my hard earned cash!

Steven Cranston, London

Bold pirate

The main issue of my letter is piracy. It seems that some software houses believe that Turbo Loading is the ultimate copy protection.



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▶cont'd from P17

Quoting 'Commodore User': '...introduction to turbo loading, Bubble Bus has found that its own tape duplicators no longer work, so this should pretty well deter the home copier.'

According to your November issue, a home taped copy of a turbo game seldom loads reliably! Does anyone believe this? First of all, a taped copy does load reliably. Secondly, it only takes me about five minutes to copy a turbo game!

I must warn you of industry standards in this matter. I can easily transfer turbo routines to a disk. I just ...(CENSORED by the Ed).

Most companies are so sure of their turbos that they don't protect the game in any other way. How about checking for the presence of the turbo? That would make things much more difficult.

Living in the capital of Denmark, I know lots of other small-time pirates and I'm the proud owner of some 320 programs. You may think it's a lot, but for a pirate it's quite normal.

A Danish 'cracker'

Well, those companies who thought they were safe are obviously being ripped off at every turn. Perhaps with more information like this, they'll finally perfect a fool-proof device to kill off the pirate.

Geordie joy

I couldn't believe my optical receivers when I picked up the December issue of PCG – a free tape with five MEGA-games for the '64!!! 'Cor, what a cracker,' I thought. Still not believing what was on the tape, I hammered a 12 inch nail through my head using a largish mallet.

Yes, by Geordie, it was true, five hot games for me to view. (Phew! Whee!). I bought the mag, ripped off the tape and loaded it ... *Boulder Dash* knocked by eyeballs through the back of my skull (via the nail wound), *Black Knight*, however, bored me stiff. Yes, PCG, what a flippin' flop! I found the sound depressing and as for brilliant animation, ha! Flickery, jerky and boring to look at. However, *Eureka* was brilliant, absolutely brilli-fab! A whole 60 location adventure for nowt.

Cliffhanger made me laugh my sides out, it was cush (cush means great in Geordie, OK?). I must admit, though, that I found *Storm Warrior* a bit of a bottle dropper (let down). Please do this sort of thing again, and as soon as possible.

Gary (the silly one) Anderson, Newcastle upon Tyne

Glad to hear you liked the tape Gary. We hope we can do it again, too.

Please keep originality rating

Having been an addicted fan of your magazine for the past eight months, I must say that I am impressed. Yours is the only magazine which I read from cover to cover. The reviews are first-class, accurate and plentiful.

Talking about reviews, in recent months I have read criticisms about the 'originality' rating. I feel it is a necessary part of any review, for many companies diddle us out of millions of pounds with cheap variations on old, worn out games whilst those who introduce a fabulous original hit fail to be credited for the achievement. So keep the reviews as they are, lads.

David Trussler, Aldershot, Hants

Lads? What about me?

PCG is money well spent

I bought my first ever copy of PCG back in October and from then on I haven't looked back. You may think us Scots are tight with our money but this 75p is well spent.

If you folks out there take advice from people then listen to this. If you haven't played *Elite* for the BBC you haven't lived. My friend Ian (thought I'd mention his name as it was on his comp I played it) has purchased this remarkable game. I'm hopeless at docking but he is quite good. Ian (that's 50p he owes me now) disagrees with the ratings you gave *Elite*. All ratings should have been 13 out of 10.

Personally, I have a message for the people at Acornsoft. 'Make *Elite* run on the Spectrum, OK?'

Simon Burrell, Glasgow

There's a little item in our Buzz section this month which just might interest you, Simon.

Quality first

First, I would just like to say that the Christmas special was GREAT!! I own a Spectrum and after seeing *Jasper* on the cassette included with the issue, I have decided to buy it. All the demos were good except *Backpackers* which was a bit of a disappointment.

Why are software houses obsessed with cramming as many screens as possible into a game at the expense of content per screen? *Jet Set Willy's* screens lack the complexity of *Manic Miner's* and *Psytraxx* (apart from being a poor version of *Atic Atac*) has so many screens that it soon becomes a bore. Surely quality should come before quantity.

Thomas Henry, Sunderland

Lots of people would agree with you there. But there is one extra benefit of an arcade-adventure game having lots of screens – it makes it more interesting to map out, something which plenty of gamesters like doing.

Reader ratings

What a mag! Thanks for a brilliant 'prezzie'! I've never stopped playing *Eureka*.

My top five Commodore 64 games are:

5. *High Noon*, 4. *Manic Miner* 3. *Jet Set Willy*, 2. *Quo Vadis + Trollie Wallie* 1. *Boulder Dash + Lazy Jones*.

My game of the year awards are:

Worst game: *Super Blitz*
Best graphics: *Cliff Hanger*
Best awesomeness: *Quo Vadis*
Least responsive: *Super Blitz*
Overall best: *Knight Lore*

Nameless, Woking

Sorry, nameless, you forgot to sign the letter! Where did you learn to count and what's this 'Best awesomeness'?!

How do you complete Strangeloop?

Before I have to wear a wig, is there anyone out there who knows how to complete *Strangeloop*. I have got to the control room, but nothing happened.

Oh, and before I have to rip out the hairs on my chest, does anyone know the endless lives Poke for *Monty Mole*? Please print my phone number: Lowestoft 81875.

PS. My mum is going to give me a fiver if I get this letter printed.

Tim Sampson, Lowestoft, Suffolk

She wouldn't if she knew how many phone calls you're about to get.

Ode to the Evil Dead

Of all the magazines I know,
That I read through and through,
PCG is just the best,
I tell you that is true.

I often agree with your reviews,
Your system is way ahead.
The only one I thought was wrong,
Was that of *The Evil Dead*.

The game is great, the sound is too,
I tell you it's not just gore,
And if you print this letter, friends,
I'll be grateful evermore.

Quaver, Hemel Hempstead, Herts

That's an awful long time to be grateful, Quaver.



Gibbering genius

Greetings, humans. The Master here. I have been asked to forward a message from the Gibberish Speakers Supporters Club. It reads as follows:

'We, Gibberish Speakers of Alpha-Centauri wish to humbly thank you for assisting the spread of this wondrous language. In your excellent map of *Strangeloop* you included an accompanying note written in this remarkable language.

'We were very impressed with the standard of phrasing which included excellent grammar like "Spectrum 48K as it actually looks on screen," and, "printouts of each the first time."

Such literary genius must not go undiscovered. Many thanks.'

The Master
(sent via London N16, UK, Earth, Sirius sector)

We should have made it part of the competition to try to unscramble that note. It can be done. Even this office's literary genius can sometimes get its words wixed up.

Speccies?? Who needs 'em!!

In response to J Cowan's letter (Jan issue), I would like to tell this single-minded moron (who can't even spell 'pratts' properly) that us CBM 64 owners are far from wimpish idiots. I don't think he quite realises all the facts when he refers to the 'amazingly superior' Spectrum.

I'm not going to slag off the Speccy – in fact I was going to buy one just for the software support it enjoys. But the thing which put me off was the cost of a fully operational system.

The console itself is reasonable at £129, but then you need a real keyboard (unless you're a double-jointed octopus or India-rubber man), sound amplifier, joystick interface, tape leads, sick bag, etc, etc. The cost of which covers the £200 I paid out for 64K, SID chip, real keyboard, sprite graphics, joystick ports, TV sound, and a totally reliable tape recorder.

At this point I shall return to my cheese salad sandwich and chicken soup to await some boneheaded reply from some equally boneheaded Spectrum user.

By the way, if Master Cowans would like to call me a wimpish, half-brained pratt to my face, then I would be only too pleased to use his Spectrum (or head) as a trampoline.

R P Vidler, Southend

Hate to say it, R P, but the correct spelling is 'PRAT'.

SCRAP THE PANEL!

The recent change and new look to the magazine disappoints me.

For a start the reviews are badly written with attempted jokes being made every sentence. Then there are the stupid 'Panel Points'. Every reviewer (except on PCG hits) disagrees with the other one. Example: *Black Knight* (PCG December). Chris Anderson couldn't make up his mind (pathetic). Peter Connor didn't like it, and Bob Wade (a moron) thought it was quite good. The marks it got were stupid as well.

The review section now fits in a lot less reviews. But it was good to see *Boulder Dash* being an 'epic' Game of the Month. I am getting three Game of the Months, and three PCG hits – I hope you are right about them, but I am sure you are. You have been in the past, apart from a few exceptions.

Next, why are you so late in reviewing some games? Most of the time you review useless, unknown games and forget games like *Zaxxon, Raid Over Moscow, Ghostbusters* and ... well, the list is too long. Why bother reviewing trash like *Deus Ex Machina, Handy Andy, Vertigo, Gunslinger*, etc?

Lastly, the originality mark – KEEP IT IN! Please.

You probably won't publish this, but if you don't, just read the letter and improve the mag to glorious heights. I know you can do it! Or I'll start buying Computer and ... Games again.

Russell Lewin, Newcastle

Interesting letter, Russell. We'd like to hear what other people think of having reviews done by several people. Good thing or bad?

You're right in saying that the number of games reviewed has fallen since we started the panel reviews. That's because the comments take up space. But the games which are left out tend to be the 'useless, unknown' games you refer to. We think you'd rather we gave more space to the more significant releases.

As for being late on some reviews. You're probably not aware how long it takes to get a magazine produced, printed and distributed. For example, all the reviews in this issue had to be completed before December 10th! Nevertheless we reckon that overall our review section is more up to date than anyone else's.

From great to worse

I've written to complain about your excellent magazine. You're ruining the computer magazine business – how do you expect people to buy other magazines when yours is so good?

Here are five tips to bring the standard of your magazine down:

1. Cut down on reviews.
2. Cut the listings.
3. Cut the competitions.
4. Cut the Tricks 'n' Tactics.
5. Cut the Challenge Chamber.

Graham Webb, London

Yeah, but how do we improve it?



John Dickens, Coventry

Watching the clock

When I bought the December issue of PCG I jumped onto my bed and started exploring the pages. I came across some great hints for my games on your Tricks 'n Tactics page. So, I plonked myself down on a chair, turned on my tele and my Spectrum and loaded Daley's Decathlon.

First on the agenda was the 110m hurdles. The tip was sent in by Martin Cleaver of Hull. I did exactly as he said (which was to wait at the start position until about 970 seconds, then run, wait at the finish line until the clock goes round to 000, cross the line and get an amazing time).

I waited, and waited, and waited, and ... zzzzz. When I woke up after half an hour, it was STILL going. In fact it took 33 minutes 13 secs! NOT nine minutes. I don't want to seem boring, but this is pretty BAD! Although I must say most of the tricks 'n tactics are quite brill.

Chris Wood, Ruislip, Middx

Er, Chris, I think you just might have let the clock go round TWICE while you were asleep!

Is the Ed a RED?

Up till now I've always loved PCG. Yet, I have always been nagged by CA's biased comparisons of the '64 and Spectrum, and even more by another nagging suspicion that CA is a RED!!!

I warn you now, if this communist trend continues I will not be held responsible for my action (I'll no longer buy PCG, but get a pirate copy of it!) So there.

By the way, in Sinclair's game *Stop the Express*, shouldn't those birdy things be called McCarthy Birds?

David Susswein, Eastbourne

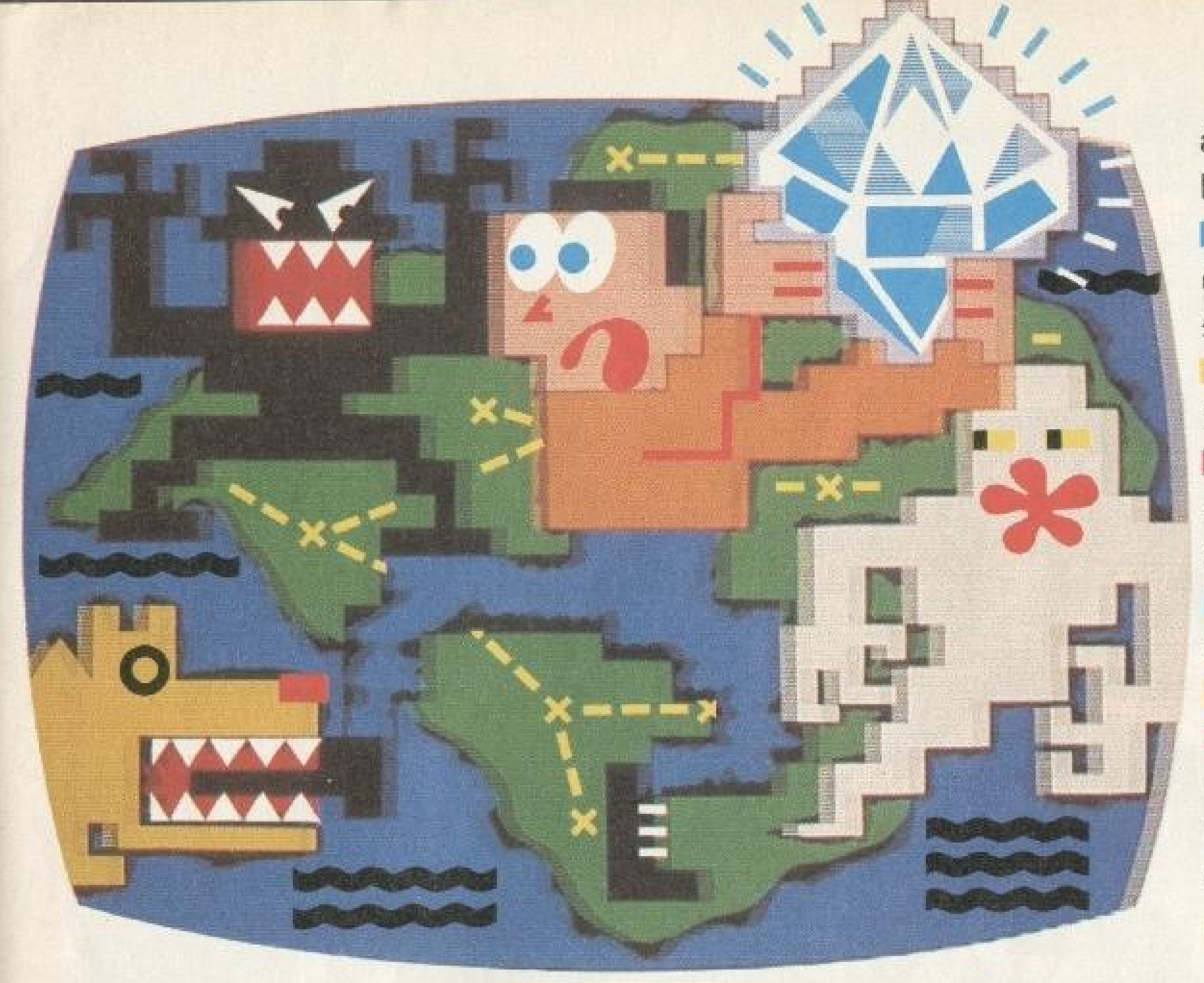
Sorry David, your suspicions about Chris (the Ed) being a RED are totally unfounded. He's been thoroughly checked out, and I'm afraid he's normal.

I'm afraid you'll have to ask Sinclair about the, er, McCarthy birds, we're totally clueless.

Jet set bug

Hands up all of your CMB 64 owners who've bought *Jet Set Willy* and found the Wine Cellar bug. You haven't? Well, let me enlighten you. It is impossible to get two of the pieces on the left hand side of the screen. So, the Software Projects bug saga continues with the CBM 64 version of *Jet Set Willy*.

Alan Matthews,
Edgeware, Middx



STONES HIDDEN ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

There are 41 of them.

41 real diamonds hidden somewhere on the island, just waiting to be discovered.

40 diamonds set in stoneware talismans. And the great Wight Eye itself, the most fabulous diamond of them all.

Only one man knows where they are hidden, and he's not saying.

All that he has to say he's said already. In the Spirit of the Stones.

It's a book and a computer game.

And together they reveal the whereabouts of all those diamonds.

But – and here's the catch...in the form of riddles and clues.

Solve the puzzles in the program and you'll find it easier to solve the puzzles in the book.

Solve the puzzles in the book and one (or more) diamonds can be yours.

Forever. And ever.

You don't even have to go to the Isle of Wight. ('Though should you want to, we've put a bargain holiday offer in every pack).

You simply work out where the diamonds are, and post off your claim.

Whoever discovers a diamond can also claim his or her share of the Royalty Fund.

This grows with every copy sold up to a maximum of £1 million.

The Spirit of the Stones book is a great read.

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But they're much more than that.

They're an adventure.

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A voyage of discovery on the Isle of Wight.

A voyage of discovery into an unknown world of poltergeists, unholy spirits, banshees, manticores and demons.

The Spirit of the Stones is as entertaining as it can be rewarding. And, like all of our software, it has been specifically designed to get the best out of Commodore hardware.

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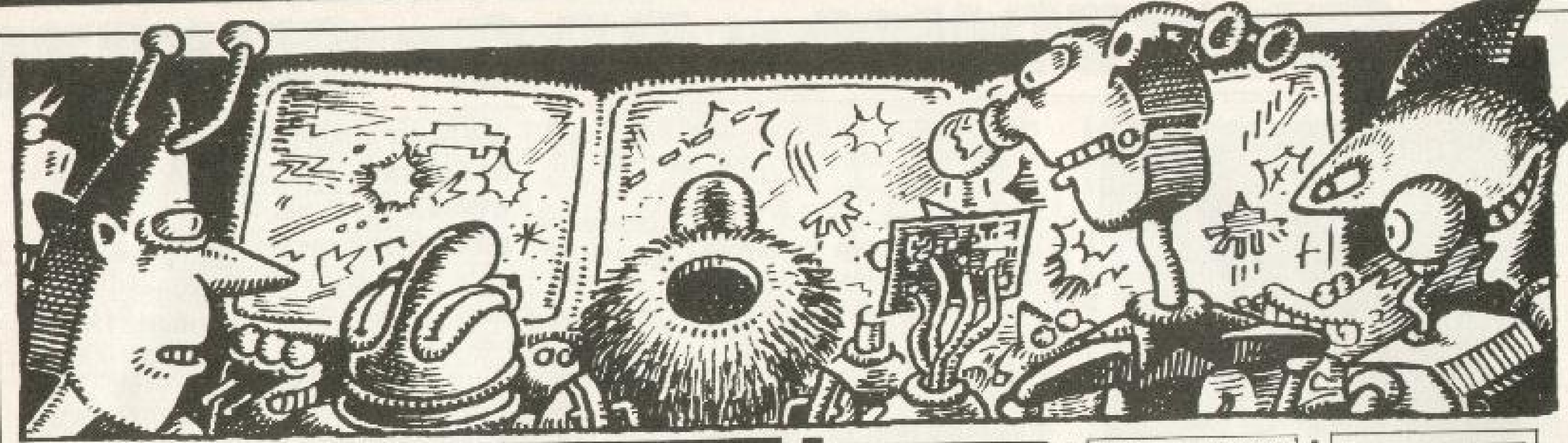
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SCREEN TEST

We're beginning to get worried. No sooner did we print our story showing Maggie Thatcher crushing Ronald Reagan in a row over which country's games were better, than a great flood of embarrassingly good US games turned up for review. I mean, what can you do with games like *Impossible Mission* and *Spy vs Spy*? Slag them off? No you can't because they're pretty amazing. Thankfully, plenty of high quality British titles are in evidence – *The Staff of Karnath, Doomdark's Revenge,* and *Cyclone* to name but a few. Anyway, wherever the games come from, we're sure you'll enjoy this month's reviews.

The PCG ratings – marks out of 10

GRAPHICS: Are they colourful, realistic, detailed? Are creatures well animated? Is movement smooth? Does the game look different, or is it similar to plenty of others on the market?

SOUND: Does it succeed in adding good atmosphere to the game? Is there plenty of variety? Is it annoying? Is there good music?

ORIGINALITY: Does the game contain significant new ideas, or is it simply a rehash of overused and tired themes? When you play it do you think 'Wow, this is different'?

LASTING INTEREST: The most important rating. Is the game addictive? Does it have depth? A long-term challenge? Will you still be playing it in a month's time?

OVERALL: This takes into account all the above, plus the price of the game. If we think it's over-priced for what it is, it could get marked down.

GAME OF THE MONTH

Impossible Mission	40

PCG HITS

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ATARI

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(Er*bert	38)

ORIC

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FRASER MARSHALL
A 17-year-old Scot from Glasgow and owner of a Commodore 64 and Vic 20. When he's not playing one of his 80 '64 games – or programming one of his own – he likes photography, fishing and hockey.



PETER CONNOR
Full-time PCG staff writer of enormous age (but still under 30). Has a passion for fast moving arcade games. Loathes adventures. 'None of 'em are worth one screen of *Snapper* or *Rocket Raid*!'



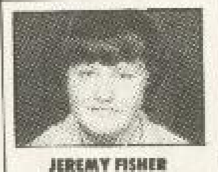
PETER WALKER
Comes from Prestbury, Cheshire and owns a 48K Spectrum for which he claims to have a 'hefty' software collection. 16 years old.



SAMANTHA HEMENS
Just turned 19 and prefers to be called Sam. Works full-time for PCG and shows a mean touch on micro games, when she's not too busy coping with PCG's huge mailbag.



SIMON ROGERS
A 16-year-old from Oxford. Has a Dragon and friends with four other micros. Enjoys playing *Chuckie Egg*.



JEREMY FISHER
A winner in our competition thanks to a sparkling review of *International Soccer*. Aged 16, lives in Barnsley, Yorkshire and owns a '64 and an expanded Vic 20.



SIMON CHAPMAN
Another 16-year-old, works for a computer shop in Leicester and claims a background knowledge of several thousand different computer games.



BOB WADE
Another full-time staff writer, he's already worked his way through a massive number of games in the few months he's been at PCG. Aged 20 and the owner of a Sinclair QL.



CHRIS ANDERSON
PCG's long-suffering editor, aged 27 and owner of a Spectrum and Commodore 64. Too busy editing the mag to spend as much time as he'd like at the keyboard.



SHINGO SUGIURA
A 17-year-old Londoner and computer addict. Owns a BBC, Oric, CGL M5, and a broken ZX81. Also writes programs and has had one published in PCG.



RICHARD PATEY
Aged 14 and comes from Cambridge. Everyone in his class at school has a micro – Richard himself has a '64 and an impressive writing style – his father works for the Daily Mirror.



ROB PATRICK
A 16-year-old from London, beginning work on A-levels. Has access to a Spectrum and BBC on both of which he's seen stacks of games. Didn't want his picture published.



MARTYN SMITH
Aged 15 and lives in Aylesbury, Bucks, preparing for O levels. Owns a Spectrum 48K but also likes football, music and Marvel comics.



STEVEN FILBY
Another of those '64 owners, he's 18 and lives in Bedford. Likes playing with computers and playing with words.



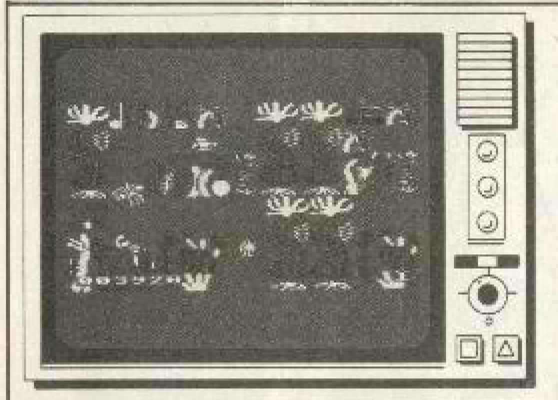
STEVE SPITTLE
Aged 17, his job in information technology gives him access to most home computers. Enjoys being on PCG's panel because 'I like receiving bulky parcels'.

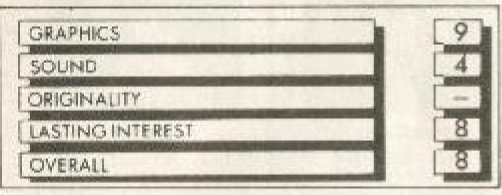


DAVID WRIGHT
A 16-year-old from Chester and an avid Atmos owner. He's had his micro seven months and is a keen adventurer, while still being partial to a bit of Galaxian-blasting.



STEVE COOKE
PCG's 29-year-old deputy editor – has a Spectrum, used to own a Lynx, and has just bought an Amstrad which he sees as the best thing since the advent of adventure games.





GAME: SABRE WULF
MACHINE: BBC B
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: ULTIMATE, £9.95

Who says the BBC only has a small memory? This faithful conversion of the Spectrum classic not only succeeds in squeezing in all 256 screens, it's also, if anything, prettier to look at than the original.

Numerous jungle plants, beautiful purple and white mountains, a stack of Ultimate nasties, and Sabreman himself in a smartened up uniform – they're all here.

Even the layout of the jungle appears to be identical, so BBC owners who get frustrated will be able to refer to our *Sabre Wulf* map in the August issue.

The idea of the game is to scour the jungle for four parts of an amulet which you need in order to escape. Aided only by a sword (which makes a tedious plinking sound in this version) and a few orchids which offer temporary invulnerability, you face a wide range of creatures, including the indestructible Wulf.

There haven't been many of these multi-screen exploration games yet on the Beeb, so this one's bound to do well. But strangely enough, despite the quality of the conversion, I didn't find the game half so enjoyable second time round. **Chris Anderson**

GAME: FAHRENHEIT 3000
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: SOFTSTONE, £5.95

This is a platform game with a social conscience. In the Winifreth Dragon Nuclear Reactor in Dorset core temperature is 2,990 degrees and rising. Meltdown is imminent. Pretty soon there will be an ecological disaster.

So, you've got to do something about it, such as switching off the valves in each of the game's 63 screens. Easier said than done, of course – this is a platform game, after all.

You get into the first screen after an excellent Bach introduction – J.S. must now be the most popular computer games accompanist.

'Entrance to the Inner Sanctum' is the title of your introduction to disaster. Your man is a plump fellow in a hat, an unlikely-looking candidate for heroism, but very brave nonetheless.

You get unlimited lives, but there is a meter monitoring your radiation level: every time you bump into an obstacle

•PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆

Doomdark's Revenge

If you've played *Lords of Midnight*, then you'll have some idea what you're in for here. If you haven't, then stand by for a game with over 48,000 different screens, 128 characters, 128 objects to collect, and an evil witch-king's daughter to defeat.

In this, the second of Beyond's 'epic' trilogy, you use single-key commands, as indicated by a keyboard overlay, to control all characters loyal to your cause in your struggle against Shareth the Heartstealer, who has captured Morkin, son of Luxor the Moonprince.

Once you've selected a character, you can look through his or her eyes at the surrounding countryside as you march across the Frozen Empire, doing battle with giants, dwarves, and barbarians. The landscape is far more detailed than in *Midnight* and covered with different features, from mountains to pyramid-like temples. There are 6,144 different locations and in each one you can look in eight different directions. The perspective is faultless and the atmosphere tremendous.

Lords of Midnight fans will find *Doomdark* a far greater challenge than its predecessor. Not only is the country bigger, but each character is much more complex and there are icelords, barbarians, dwarves, fey, and giants to recruit or, if they're hostile, defeat.

There are many more options during play. Each character, for example, has a special object, and special options include 'Give' an object and 'Use' a special object. You can also enter underground caverns, take rest, or approach other characters (with a view to recruiting them).

Recruiting other people is a far more complex process, since each one possesses no less than 11 different characteristics, each of which will influence them in their actions and attitudes towards you.

Other ingenious touches include changing weather (watch out for the rolling mist) that follows a 96 day weather cycle and flickering torches to guide you through the tunnels. The display changes colour according to the time of day – red/orange at dawn, blue at midday, and blue/black at night.

The biggest difference in *Doomdark*, however, is in winning the game. There are no less than five different victories, ranging from the simplest one of rescuing Morkin, to the 'overwhelming victory' of rescuing Morkin, killing Shareth the Heartstealer, and returning to the start with Luxor, Rorthron, Tarithel the Fey, and Morkin still alive.

At the beginning of the game you control only three characters, Luxir, Rorthron, and Tarithel. Forces usually join in battle almost immediately and

PANEL POINTS

I wasn't too sure about the colour choice in this game. I like the idea of different colours for different times of day, but in practice I found the red/yellow combination rather murky on my TV. This was a pity because there's so much more to look at.

The other disappointment was the tunnels. It's a great idea being able to enter caverns and things, but again – in practice – I found that it wasn't quite so exciting. However, these are only minor quibbles. Overall the game's extremely impressive.
Peter Connor

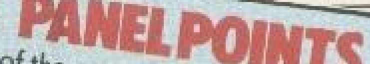
Some of the colour combinations in *Doomdark's* graphics don't work too well. Apart from that, it's a worthy follow up to *Lords of Midnight*. The basic format is the same, but the game is much bigger, much more complex.

I especially liked the attempt to give characters more pesonality – each has a large number of character traits which vary according to events. And the underground tunnels with their flickering torches are an inspired boost to the overall atmosphere.

I wonder how much further the epic game can be expanded.
Chris Anderson

I really like the landscape in this game – there's so much more to look at than in *Midnight*, and you can spend hours just exploring the different places. The changing weather is a great idea too.

What really grabbed me though was the challenge of the game. There's so much more to the characters in this game, and so far I've found it very difficult to survive long enough to complete even the most basic victory. Difficult . . . but very exciting!
Samantha Hemens



PANEL POINTS

Control, it must be said, is very difficult. Jumping is particularly difficult to achieve and makes this game very frustrating. Half the time, executing a finely timed jump is more luck than skill.

Sixty-four screens should present a long-term challenge and perhaps Willy fans who cannot wait for him to meet the taxman will buy this difficult game for practice!

Martyn Smith

Graphics are reasonable and animation is smooth, even though some of the characters are a little difficult to identify. Colour is used fairly well, except on some of the screens where the backgrounds created a dreadful shimmering on my television set. Sound is limited to a good rendition of Toccata.

Fahrenheit 3000 is by no means a sub-standard game, but it's not the best of its kind.

Steve Spittle

The music on this game is tremendous, it's a pity that it doesn't play all the way through. The game is very much like *Jet Set Willy* and equally as hard in places. The graphics aren't as attactive though and the colours don't seem to have been as well thought out.

Bob Wade



GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
ORIGINALITY	4
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

your level goes up, until eventually you succumb to radiation sickness.

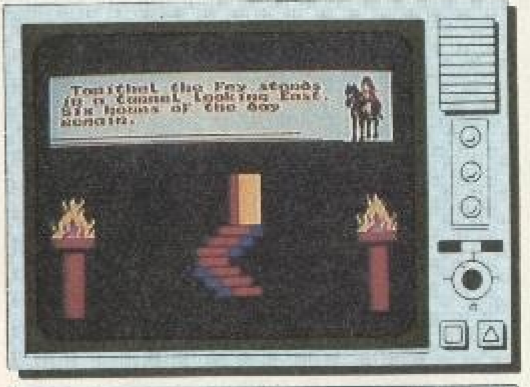
The first room, like the others, is full of platforms, steps and surreally nasty creatures. Things whirr and whine, float up and down and there are even strange mutant pussy cats – presumably to catch strange mutant mice.

Key control is quite straightforward – left, right, jump – and success is mainly a matter of timing and strategy. The rooms have a variety of problems to negotiate, and some will prove easier than others. Getting through all 63, however, will be a dangerous and time-consuming business.

Fahrenheit's colours and graphics are well above average and the game is large enough and good enough to keep you at it for a long time. But comparison has to be made with *Jet Set Willy*, and here Softstone's game loses out in terms of originality and wit. Plus, of course, the complete lack so far of any Pokes for infinite lives.

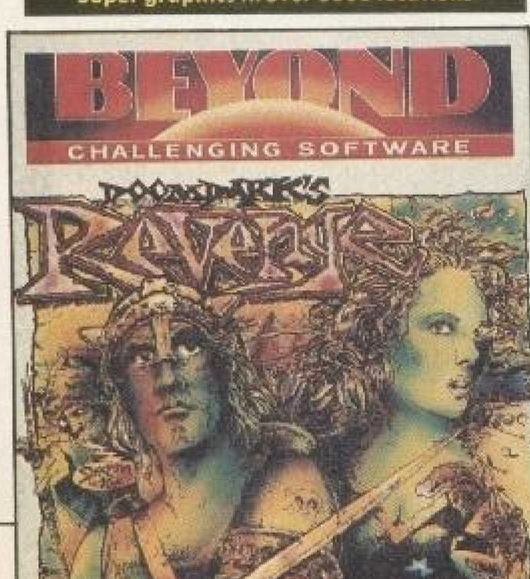
Peter Connor

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Super graphics in over 6000 locations





Imorthorn the Fey and the stones of Silorin

GAME: DOOMDARK'S REVENGE
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: BEYOND £9.99

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	–
ORIGINALITY	8
LASTING INTEREST	10
OVERALL	10

what's more the wolves, skulkrin, ice trolls, and dragons don't just stay in one place in this game–they move about, making progress for individual characters more risky. Because of the increased complexity of the program, the game varies tremendously each time you play it, and victory is far, far more difficult to achieve than in *Midnight*.

There's so much one could say about this game, but it all boils down to one thing – go out, buy it, load it up, and spend hours, days, weeks, perhaps even months playing it. You'll enjoy every minute.

Steve Cooke

Brian Bloodaxe

No, it's not another Viking adventure game from Level 9, it's a wacky, way-out, wonky, and extremely challenging platform game with over 100 screens and 300 sprites, quirky surprises, and objects to collect.

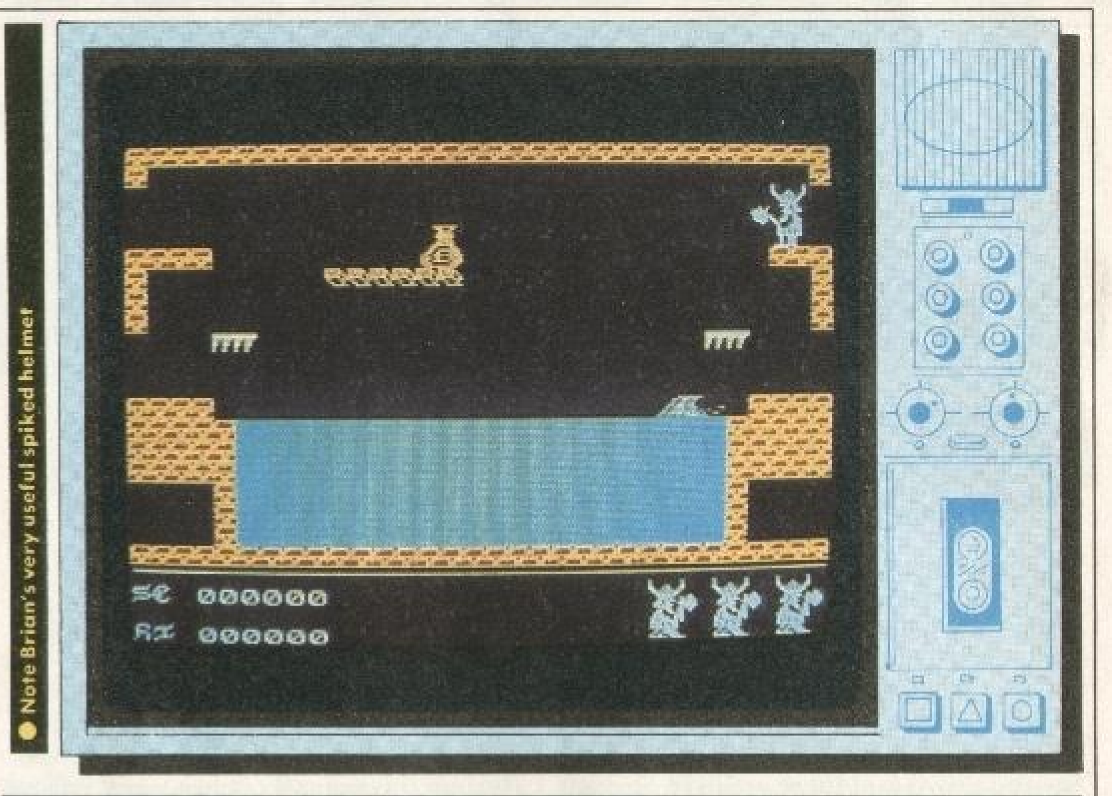
Your on-screen identity is in the care of one Brian Bloodaxe, a horn-helmeted hero who can move and jump in all the usual directions as well as pick up, drop, or use assorted items as and when he comes across them.

Items include pints of lager to boost your energy, which otherwise deteriorates as you move about. The display also shows your score, the current hi-score, and a group of little Vikings (representing whatever remains of your four lives) doing the hokey-cokey in the corner.

Other essential articles include various different colour keys which will enable you to open similarly coloured gates to proceed to new pillaging grounds.

The sprites also have their surprises. Ducks, for example, may trample you to death, but you can also jump onto their backs and from there to another screen. Platforms that look safe and secure may suddenly dodge out of the way if you jump towards them.

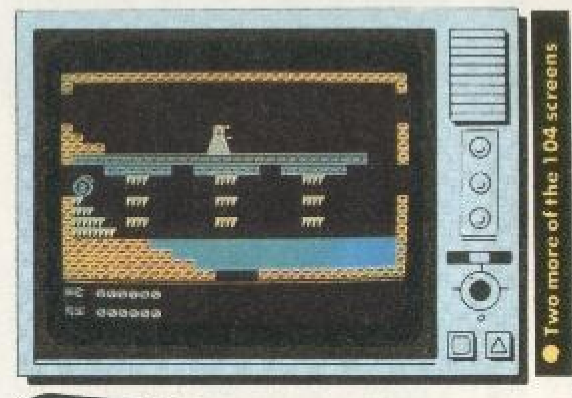
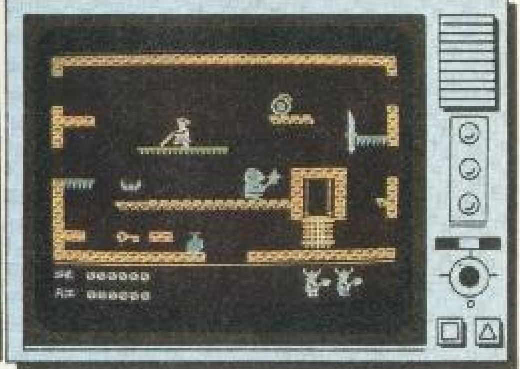
In fact, there are a whole host of unusual features in this game. Your horny helmet, for example, isn't just there for the sake of appearances – it can be a real pain in the backside for some of your opponents. What's more, you can jump and stick yourself to the ceiling sometimes if you're in a really tight spot.



• Note Brian's very useful spiked helmet

GAME: BRIAN BLOODAXE
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS, CURS, KEMP, SNC
FROM: THE EDGE, £7.95

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
ORIGINALITY	5
LASTING INTEREST	9
OVERALL	8



• Two more of the 104 screens

Other innovations include the ability to dig through platforms (sometimes the only way to access certain areas) – but find your spade first. One screen even features a giant pool table, which will almost certainly have you snookered if you're not very careful. If you fancy a bit of a shoot-'em-up, there's even a pistol to be found.

If you've been playing *Knight Lore*, you'll be familiar with the idea of using objects as stepping stones. Brian can drop an object, climb onto it, and then jump for all he's worth to reach otherwise inaccessible areas.

Some great music starts the game and play is accompanied by melodious beeps. Every screen has a humorous link with a town or area of Great Britain (Snooker table = Poole, geddit?) and your task is nothing less than the conquest of every square inch of GB. Yes, Brian, definitely a platform game that has the edge over all the others...

Steve Cooke

PANEL POINTS

This Norse-variant of the platform theme will really keep the Viking blood running hot. Not only plenty of screens, but lots of unusual ways to get across them.

There are surprises around every corner, and the most obvious way of crossing the screen is not necessarily the best. For instance, if you were faced with an impassable stretch of water, would you consider trying to walk on it, or even hitch a lift from a passing shark?

The main problem is not knowing what you can or can't walk on safely. Also, be very careful, because some objects may be okay when you're on top, but deadly otherwise.

Marcus Jeffery

For those who are looking out for a decent platform game, this is the one to get hold of. I particularly liked the idea of each screen being a proper location and the variety of Brian's nicely drawn enemies is commendable. However, most of you Spectrum owners will have got dozens of platform games like this and despite its many original touches, Brian is a little too closely related to our friend Willy.

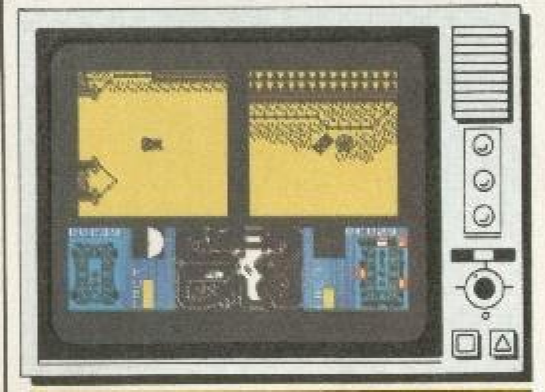
Alan Green

Basically another platform game, but there's some nice touches, such as being able to jump ON baddies but not walk into them and Brian's amazing ability to walk on water and hang from wooden platforms using his horned helmet.

Oh, by the way, watch out for the loading error hoax at the beginning – it nearly got me! A lot of fun if you're into jokes.

Samantha Hemens

PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	3
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

GAME: BATTLECARS
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: GAMES WORKSHOP, £7.95

Battlecars features four different sections all of which should keep you occupied for some time with their complexity and action. The four sections are a driving race, a car fight in an arena, a battle in a town and a chance to design your own car.

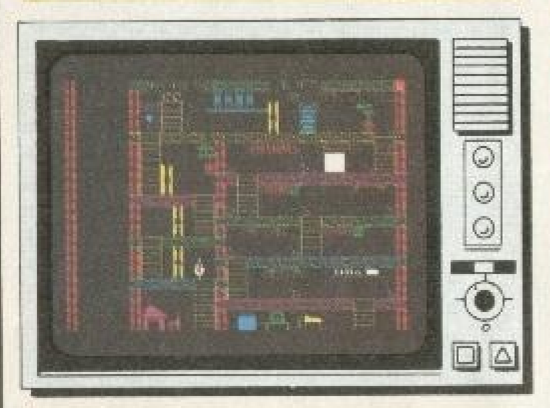
The cars are horrendous monsters kitted out with all sorts of technology and weapons to make them real mean machines. They have armour, offensive weapons like missiles and lasers and defences like oil slicks and smoke.

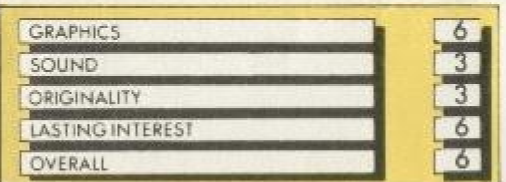
There are already eight cars set up but you can produce your own using a beautiful graphic designer sequence.

The cars battle either against each other or against the clock on the racing circuit. The autodrome is a bare arena in which the cars try to inflict more damage on their opponents than they receive themselves.

Slug City is a townscape in which two players can fight it out, this time in the close confines of the streets. The circuit is less violent, with cars competing in a straight driving race round some rough terrain or against the clock.

In the autodrome and the circuit you





GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	3
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	6

GAME: PLUMMET
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS, KEMP, CURS, SINC
FROM: INTERCEPTOR, £7.00

Fortunately it's not you that plummets in this game, it's the mayor – three floors in a lift while you stand by having a good laugh.

You're supposed to be trying to help the poor trapped man by collecting ropes to hold up the lift. Thirty ropes will save him but you can only collect them one at a time and, as you would expect, there are lots of nasty things trying to stop you.

The hotel you are in is represented on three screens starting with the lobby, while the lift is stuck on the third screen up. You have to pick up one of the coiled, flashing ropes and climb a series of stairs through the three screens to the lift.

In your path there are, of course, a variety of hazards. The first floor features concrete floor blocks which move up and down trying to crush you, as well as a zombie doorman who shuffles up and down, his back permanently hunched.

The second floor has a mutant revolving door and four fire doors, while the third has four doormen and falling dust, all of which prove fatal to your rotund character.

The doormen can be dealt with by

•PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆



●Great 3D graphics with brilliant detail

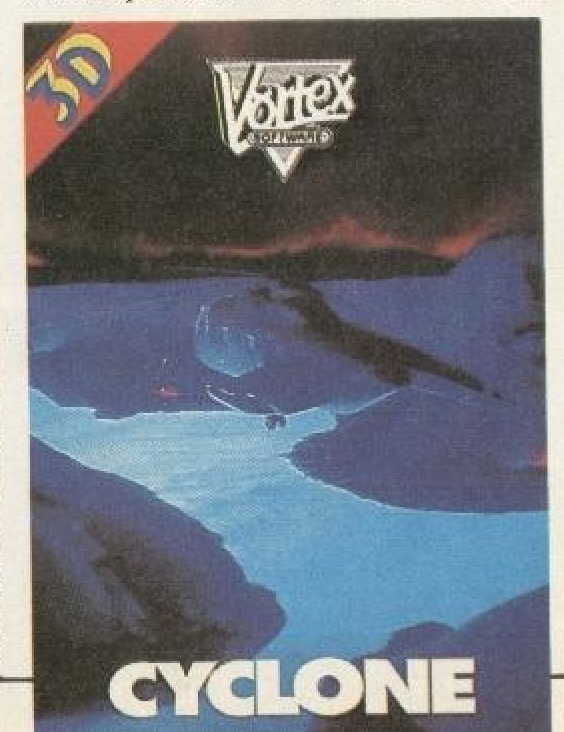
GAME: CYCLONE
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS, KEMP, SINC, AGF
FROM: VORTEX, £6.95

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	6
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	8

Cyclone

According to the ads this game will take the country by STORM – geddit? Certainly the wind blows fiercely in this challenging follow-up to *Tornado Low Level.*

So much so that the helicopter you pilot can get blown off course, and possibly even dumped onto the ground. It all depends how close you are to the



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can compete against a computer opponent, but in Slug City it's you, a friend and two keyboard overlays battling it out.

The screen for each game shows the area in which each car is driving, a map of the whole territory, its speed and fuel, as well as updates on the damage it's sustained and weapons still available.

The sound isn't up to much, there is very little of it, but that doesn't detract from the fun.

It will take you a while to get to know the controls and all the aspects of the game but it's well worth doing. It's a bleak view of an automative future but terrific to play. **Bob Wade**

The game itself is best suited to people with more than the regulation number of hands – some twelve keys are required for absolute control of your vehicle.

Despite this, *Battlecars* is really rather fun. The screen layout is original and clear, well suited (as are the dual sets of keys) to the two-player option. Also, given the amount going on all at once, the graphics are very adequate, if a little jerky.

The game requires some effort to be put into it for its entertainment potential to be realized but it is worth it.

Peter Walker

PANEL POINTS

Because of the incredible amount of keys needed to control the car, especially if you chose to include weapons, it soon becomes apparent that to keep moving as you want and to attack your opponent as well is almost impossible.

This is not a game I would recommend.

Martyn Smith

I found the game boring and complicated, which is a great pity, because the instructions makes it look *really* exciting. Another one for the white elephants graveyard, I'm afraid.

Simon Rogers

dematerialising them with a tranquiliser, but you can only shoot this while you are carrying a rope. The fire doors are also opened by shooting at them, though why tranquilisers should open doors I'm not sure.

If you lose all your lives the chain which is holding the lift snaps and the mayor plummets three floors while shouting for help. Unfortunately you don't get to see him hit the basement in a crumpled heap, but you can't have everything can you?

High scores for this game aren't going to look very impressive since you only score one point for each rope attached. If you can get more than 10 you're doing well. **Bob Wade**

The background graphics are attractively drawn, but rather large. The size of the characters produces extremely annoying colour-clash problems. This results in the game characters – and especially the zombie doorman who flickers awfully – becoming partially invisible for considerable periods of time.

Sound consists of a squeal when you die and a grating click as you run along.

My interest lasted for about 45 minutes, due to poor execution and a lack of any real addictive qualities. Interceptor are not doing their reputation

PANEL POINTS

any good by producing games like this one.

Steve Spittle

Uninteresting graphics combined with pathetic sound and only three screens makes this one to avoid.

The main feeling you get out of this game is sheer boredom as you go past the same uninteresting hunch-backed zombie doormen who stroll around looking very tired – and who can blame them?

Getting all 30 ropes ought to be a challenge – but I don't think anyone will be able to stand the tedium for that long.

Steve Perkins

☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT•

centre of the cyclone which is threatening a group of very pleasant looking islands.

Your mission is to locate and pick up crates of medical supplies, five in all, and return them to home base. The trouble is finding them. As in *TLL*, your aircraft is seen flying over a scrolling 3D landscape. But this time the area is much bigger. There are a total of 14 islands separated by expanses of ocean and it would take about five minutes of flying time to visit all of them.

But visiting isn't enough. Each island must be explored in search of a crate and this means repeatedly using an 'alternative view' which allows you to look at objects (eg. houses, cliffs) from the other side to see if there's anything hidden behind them.

By the time you've covered an island or two, you'll be running low on fuel and must find a base to land on. There's also that cyclone to worry about. You can monitor its progress (and your own) on a map of the islands. When it starts approaching you'd better clear out, or make an emergency landing.

Meanwhile a clock is ticking away. If you haven't completed your mission within about 15 minutes, you must start again. If you do succeed, you get another set of crates to pick up in trickier locations.

Although *Cyclone* looks similar to *TLL*, there are enough improvements to give it a character of its own. The game is one of exploration and strategy rather than pin-point control.

There's plenty of attention to detail, including a useful range of indicators on the right and bottom of the screen. I also like the people who stand and wave at you on the islands – a pity you can't do anything to help them, really.

Still, this is an impressive piece of programming and an addictive game.

Chris Anderson

From the moment the helicopter first takes off, with superbly animated whirling rotor blades, to the final crash, the game is enthrallingly addictive. Although derivative of Vortex's previous games, it is enjoyable in its own right. Control of the helicopter is easily mastered but finding all five crates is still difficult, especially with the ever-present threat of the cyclone and reckless pilots. The 3D graphics are superb with brilliantly detailed houses, hills and beaches sweeping beneath you.

Addictive and frustrating, *Cyclone* is an excellent game and highly recommended.

Steve Perkins

This is an excellent game; it combines a good blend of arcade action and strategic planning. The graphics are drawn in a solid perspective format which allows you to toggle between two views

PANEL POINTS

of the action, so you never need be unsure of your position. Your helicopter has a shadow which is extremely useful for knowing your exact position in relation to the ground.

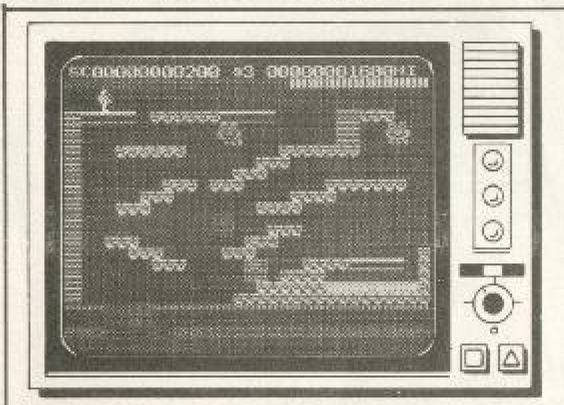
Overall, the graphics are slick, without any noticeable colour clash and the 3D effect really does enhance the realism of this game. Sound is functional, with a rasping noise accompanying the movement of your helicopter.

Cyclone is very addictive, very attractive and surely the best game from Vortex.

Steve Spittle

I've always fancied myself as a helicopter pilot so I really enjoyed playing this. The graphics were good (despite the angular regularity of the islands). The only question I can ask is why are there so many aircraft in a cyclone zone?

Simon Rogers



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

GAME: ASTRONUT
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS, KEMP
FROM: SOFTWARE PROJECTS, £5.95

Software Projects are renowned for their platform games and this one should be a worthy addition to the line.

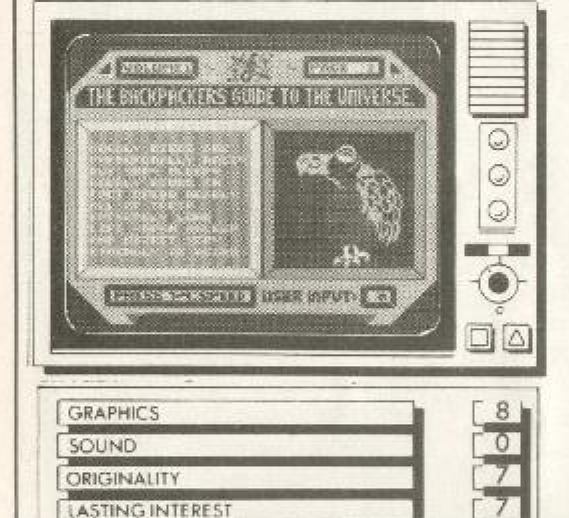
There are 15 screens, on each of which you have to collect three 'resource' blocks by pushing them onto a matter transporter. The blocks appear one at a time and, as usual, there is a wide range of monsters and obstacles to stop you.

You can start at any one of the 15 screens so it's a high score challenge. This does have one advantage: you don't suffer the frustration of mastering the first screen just to be killed off in the next.

Also, it's not a matter of passing over objects since you have to move the blocks around the screen.

You cannot jump, so your only way up is to stand on top of an erupting volcano which will boost you up to the first platform you come across. You can also travel up by using a red escalator which moves automatically, so watch out for dangers at the top before you decide to use it.

Fortunately, you are allowed to fall any distance in pursuit of your blocks but a missed step may have you trying to hoist yourself up to the top again.



GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	0
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

GAME: BACKPACKERS GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: FANTASY, £7.50

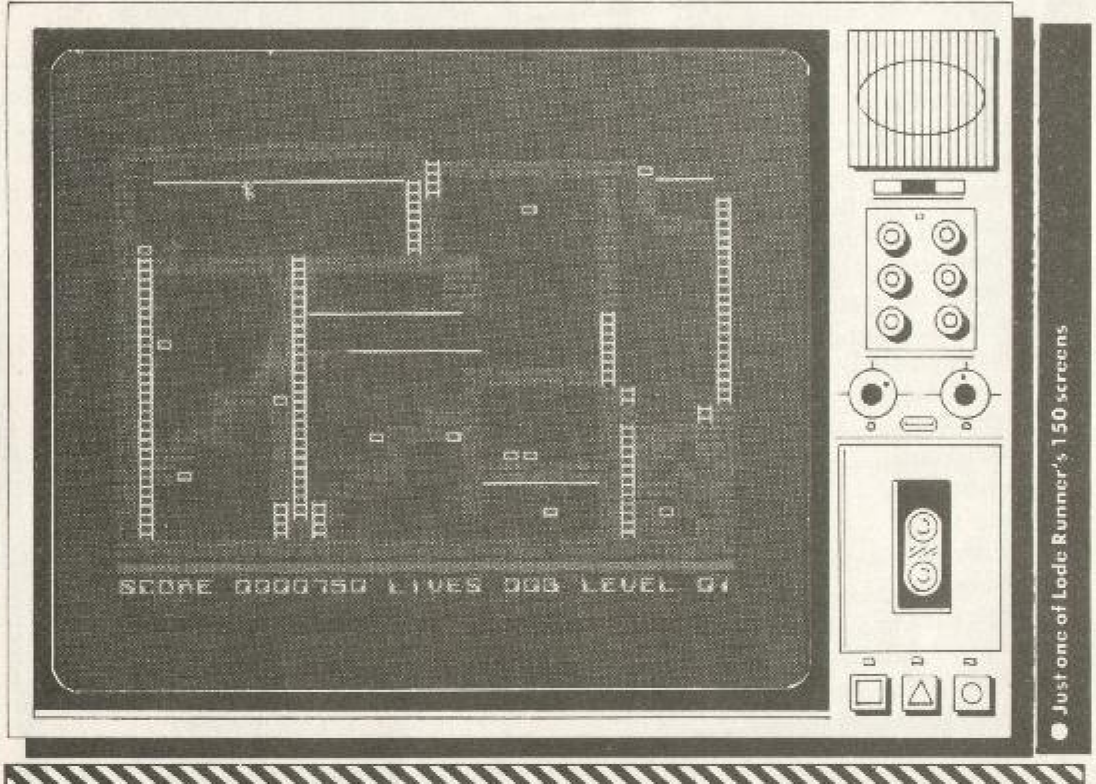
The scenario pits Fantasy's hero Ziggy against the 'infinitely evil Scarthax' who has found the Great Plug of the universe and is threatening to send the whole of creation down the drainpipe. Ziggy's not the sort to take this lightly. He accepts the challenge to tackle Scarthax – but he only has twelve hours to do so.

Arriving on the planet of Thallis he has to assemble a hit squad of creatures. Details of these are found on the flip side of the tape in the Backpackers Guide. They include such weirdos as the schizoid Double Headed Emu of Thwark, the paranoid Googly Bird and the disgusting Snottoid.

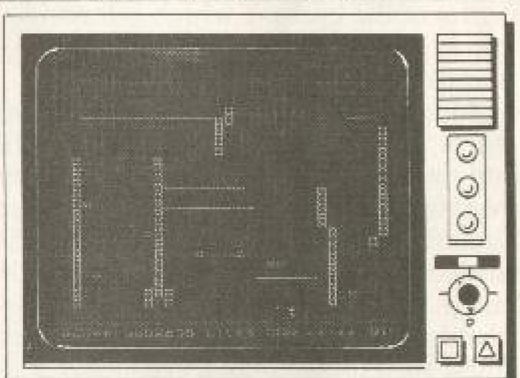
Ziggy's backpack is singularly capacious: he can store all eleven critturs at the same time. Unfortunately they don't all rub along together very well – they may eat each other – and they all require different diets. Working all this out, as well as finding them, is what this first part of the projected *Backpackers* trilogy is all about.

Thallis consists of a huge underground maze, with lots of colourful flora – but fauna is a little thin on the ground. As Ziggy goes hovering around he has to

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● Just one of Lode Runner's 150 screens



Lode Runner

GAME: LODE RUNNER
MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
CONTROL: KEYS, KEMP
FROM: SOFTWARE PROJECTS, £9.95

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	3
ORIGINALITY	–
LASTING INTEREST	9
OVERALL	8

This title was a big hit some time back in America and Software Projects have been trumpeting their release of it in Britain as a Major Event, guys.

In essence it's very similar to *Space Panic.* You run round a network of ladders and platforms collecting gold nuggets and steering clear of a gang of chasing men. You can dig traps for them to fall into at a touch of a fire button, but unlike *Space Panic* you can't then have the satisfaction of stamping them out of existence. You simply secure yourself a few moments' reprieve.

What *Lode Runner* does have are a few extra features such as invisible trap doors – and more importantly 150 diffe-

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The monsters come in all shapes and sizes, from enormous dragons blowing fireballs to yo-yoing spiders and dipping ducks. Many of these can be disposed of with your handy time delay bombs. These will only destroy the beasts so it won't matter if you drop one accidentally.

As with any platform game there are different floors and this one has an extending platform which flashes and then disappears. All this means that most screens require good timing to complete and with the time limit on each one you are continually under pressure to act quickly.

Bob Wade

It seems that Software Projects have laid a claim to the platform game and *Astronut* is another example of this. However, they have not forgotten that originality is the spice of a games player's life and this new game contains some nice touches which make it fairly special.

I especially liked the volcanoes which throw you into the air and some of the graphics are very good, agreeably surreal and typically zany.

Though not a classic like, say *Manic Miner* or *Jet Set Willy*, this is still enjoyable and you probably won't regret paying for it.

Rob Patrick

PANEL POINTS

Are Spectrum programmers really so lost for ideas that they have resorted to combining elements of previous platform games to make new ones?

I mean, the monsters are more than a little reminiscent of *Jet Set Willy* and as for the volcanoes – well, substitute them for springs and you've got *Frank N Stein*.

This is not to say that *Astronut* isn't enjoyable; it's certainly a worthwhile game in its own right. The graphics are large and brashly colourful, whilst the 15 often difficult screens should prove quite addictive. Sound-wise however, things aren't so good.

Peter Walker

shoot aliens: but these are just rudimentary balls and become very boring indeed. Even worse, there's no sound at all in the program.

This is not a game which you could call exciting. It requires patient exploration, map-making and note-taking in order to work out the various combinations of animals you can carry. The absence of sound is a disappointment, as is the fact that Ziggy's backpack is not yet convertable to submarine or buggy – we'll have to wait for parts two and three for that.

Backpackers is not going to give instant fun, and will appeal more to those with time and tenacity to spare.

Peter Connor

I found this rather unoriginal and something of a disappointment. The Guide itself is a very clever idea, wonderfully implemented with a great deal of imagination and humour. The game, however, suffers from being yet another run of the mill arcade adventure.

Certainly it is complex and will take a long time to solve, but I found the instructions lacking in places. On a brighter note, the graphics are good and there is a useful option to save your current position.

All in all, I wasn't particularly stunned by this game and although it does provide a very difficult challenge, I won't be holding my breath for Part Two

Steve Perkins

PANEL POINTS

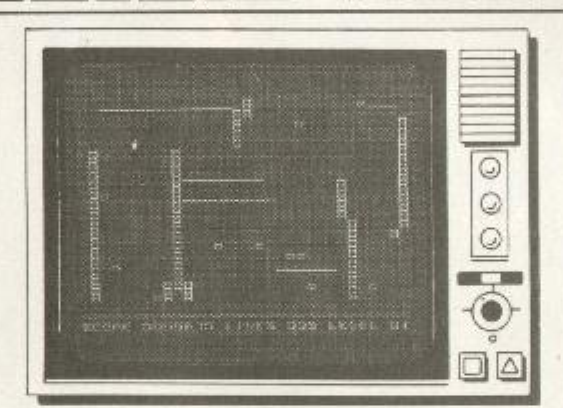
Long awaited game this, and frankly it's a big disappointment. The graphics are of a good standard and colour is used well but there is a total lack of sound – why?

There isn't much to do and it becomes clear that most of what is promised in the advertisement blurb is contained in the other two games in this series.

Let's hope that the other two games in this series are of a better standard.

Martyn Smith

PCG • HIT ☆ PCG • HIT ☆ PCG • HIT ☆ PCG • HIT •



rent screens, although the Spectrum can only hold 75 at a time (the rest are on the other side of the tape).

The program also allows you to design your own screens (although it doesn't tell you how!) and to switch the order of existing screens, a considerable boon when you're bored with the first half-dozen.

The graphics are very ordinary, with tiny, single-character size men chasing each other round. But this has compensations in that individual screens can be made far more complex.

My one gripe with the game is that there isn't enough variety. Once you've solved a few screens, the rest don't have much new to offer.

On the other hand the vast size of the game can give you motivation enough to keep tackling screens. Knock off two an evening and the game will still take 11 weeks to complete!

The play is by no means easy. It's easy to get trapped, and the large number of gold nuggets on some screens take a lot of collecting.

I've never seen the Commodore 64 versions, so I can't compare them, but I suspect it's even better – Ariolasoft are releasing it in this country.

Meanwhile this Spectrum version will do very nicely, thankyou.

The programmers at Software Projects tell me they haven't stopped playing in weeks.

Chris Anderson

This game is especially memorable because it has two features which are virtually unknown in the software industry. An immense, almost ridiculous, Software Protection Card which would be impossible to copy even for the most diligent pirate, and a very impressive customising facility.

The game itself is extremely addictive with a huge number of screens and some pleasant, if small, graphics. Your character runs about insanely and despite his matchstick construction he seems to possess a character all his own. Software Projects haven't gone overboard on the sound but given the other points of the game and the obvious memory limitations these would impose they can be forgiven for this relatively minor slip.

Lode Runner is another winner. Miss it at your peril.

Rob Patrick

PANEL POINTS

One hundred and fifty screens has to be some sort of record for a platform game.

However, this all uses up valuable memory, which has necessitated a drop in the standard of graphics. The characters are small (although they move smoothly) and all the screens are made up from a few basic components. Sound too is restricted to the odd beep or squelch.

Despite this, the game is very good fun and each stage can be enjoyed in its own right. *Manic Miner* devotees will particularly enjoy being able to hurl their man from great heights without losing a life.

It is the sheer size of the program that is so impressive. Anyone who actually finishes all 150 screens with just five lives deserves a knighthood at the very least, while the rest of us mere mortals can enjoy what is a truly excellent game.

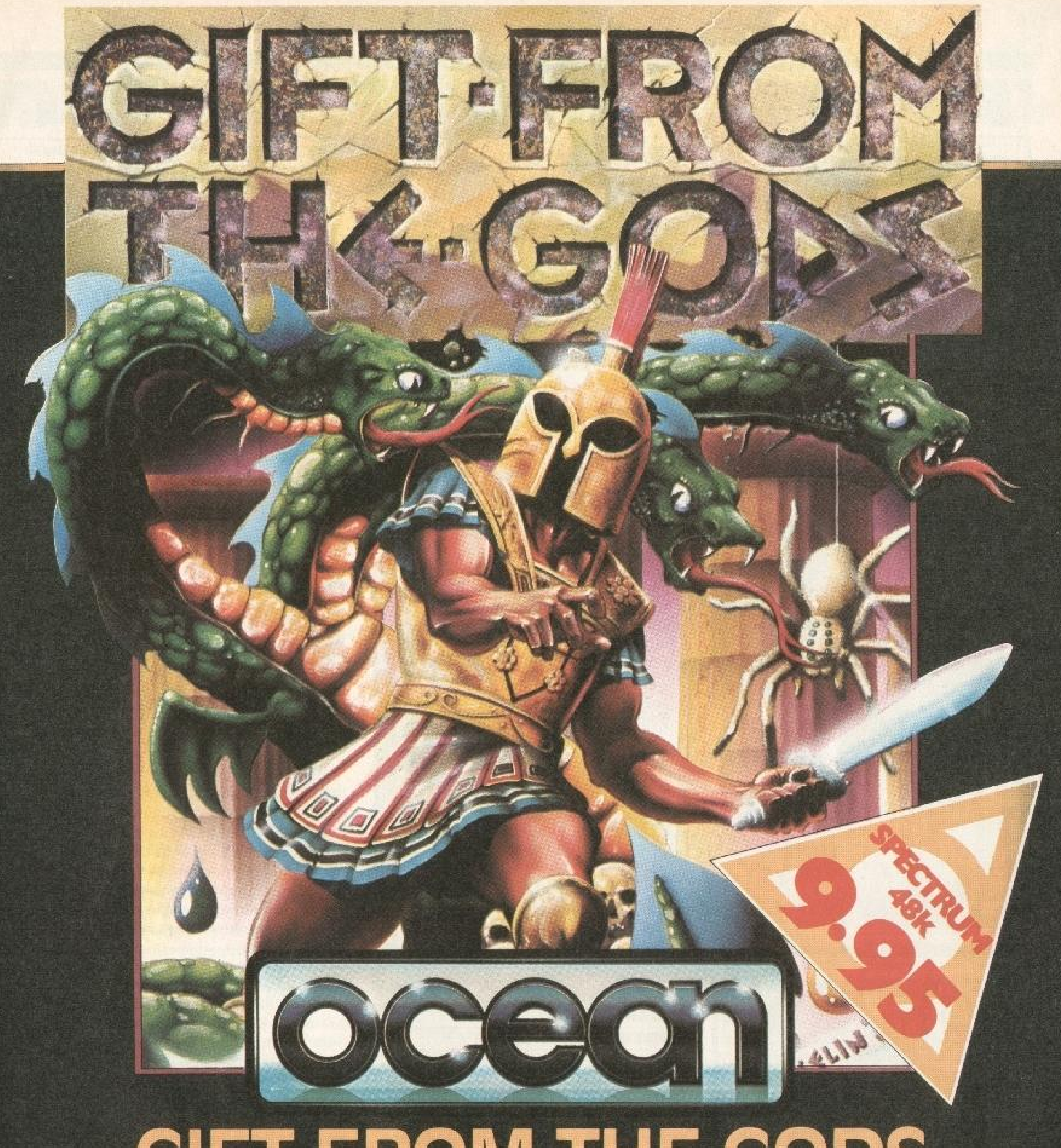
Peter Walker

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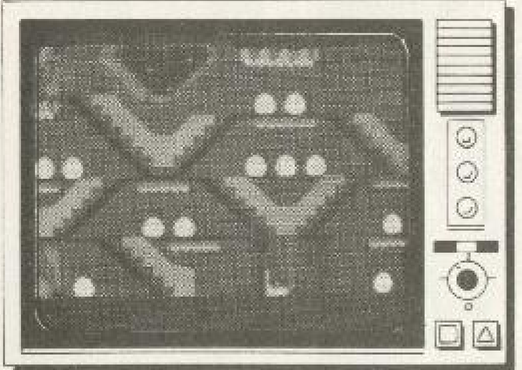


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GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
ORIGINALITY	5
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	6

GAME: STAR EGGS
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: MIRRORSOFT, £6.95

A cracking game this...cracking...get it...oh never mind! *Star Eggs* is an original game from Mirrorsoft which combines a shoot-'em-up with a platform game. Creatures from outer space are heading towards earth intent on destroying it.

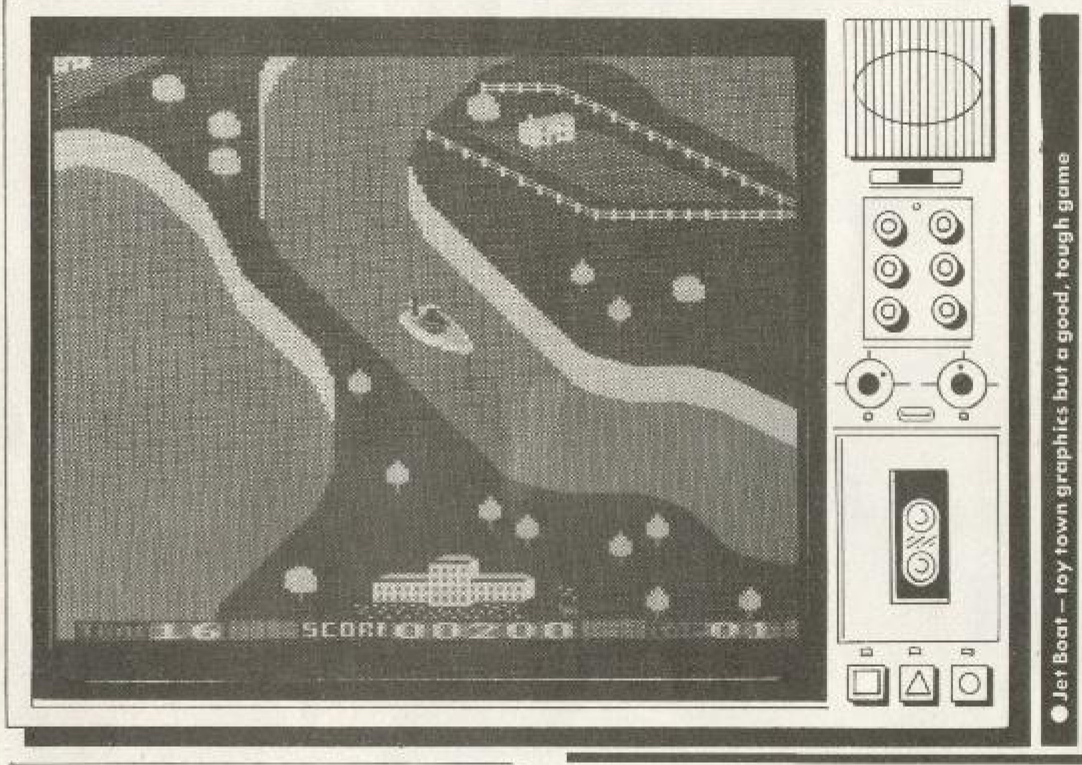
Before you can get to the eggs, you must destroy the guardian ships – there is one on each screen. This done you can enter the incubator.

To manoeuvre around the platforms there are ladders and sloping escalators, and on the later levels, steps. There is a transporter lift on the left hand side of the screen to get you up or down.

There are also guns around the screen which you can use to shoot down the occasional monster which hatches. But the aim of the game is to bash the egg over the head *before* it hatches and releases its space-ship.

Control of the characters and the various machines is with the joystick and, although this may sound hard, it is just a matter of positioning and then pressing the fire button.

If eight space-craft hatch and escape the earth will be destroyed before your very eyes. Less than eight and you will



● Jet Boat – toy town graphics but a good, tough game

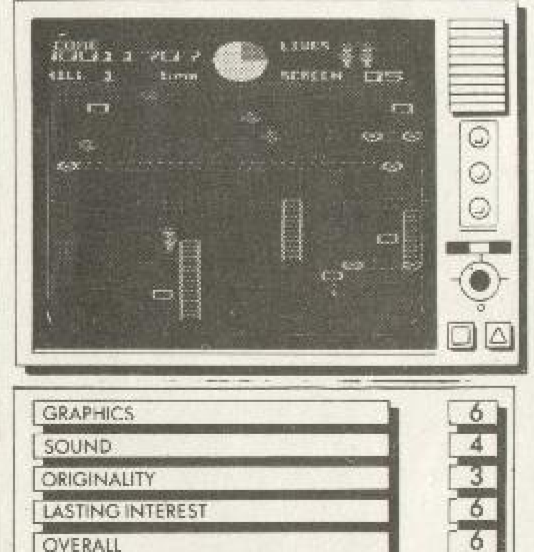
GAME: JET BOAT
MACHINE: BBC B
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: SOFTWARE INVASION, £7.95

It looks like toyland when you first see the boat (jet or not?) ready at the start, but in this Pole Position for boats you're racing against time.

I found it incredibly difficult to manoeuvre my craft for some time, but when I finally mastered the technique ... I still wasn't very good at it!

After each lap you complete there's a little sailors' ditty and you're off on the next lap. Motor chugging away, this time you're faced with more hazards, and they keep breeding with each lap of the river.

Marker flags, coiled serpents, ducks, rocks, sail boats and even alligators attempt to make your passage that much more difficult.



GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	4
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	6

GAME: LEDGEMAN
MACHINE: BBC
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: SOFTWARE PROJECTS, £7.95

Software Projects seem to have the uncanny knack of producing more and more platform games. This is another one.

For those of you not looking for original, entertaining stuff you'd do well to buy this. An endless amount of screens with ever increasing difficulty, and after you've completed eight, there's not a lot left to see, since they just repeat themselves again, and again...

Little Ledgie, the guy who's got to do all the climbing, has got a myriad of nasties to contend with, including sentient barrels (they'll be talking next!), meteorite storms and 'strange and perilous guardians', which comes in various shapes and sizes.

The precious stones Ledgie's got to get are all white, flashing and square, which makes them easy to identify with for some of us eh? The rest of the graphical characters are nicely detailed, but nothing exciting.

The various ways in which you're attacked, have at least got some originality, such as meteors destroying the platforms as they fall.

GAME: HUNCHBACK
MACHINE: AMSTRAD
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: AMSOFT, £8.95

I never really understood why *Hunchback* was such a hit with you gamesters, and this conversion hasn't brought me any nearer to solving the mystery.

In case anyone doesn't know what the game's about, here's a brief summary of the scenario: Quasimodo must rescue his sweetheart Esmerelda from the castle in which she is imprisoned.

If that's the sort of thing that rings your bell, then you may like the game. I found it pretty dull – like the graphics and the sound. **Peter Connor**

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	–
LASTING INTEREST	4
OVERALL	5

GAME: 'ER*BERT
MACHINE: AMSTRAD
CONTROL: JOYSTICK, KEY
FROM: MICROBYTE, £5.95

The asterisk gives the game away, and a very good version of *Q*Bert* it is, too. In common with past incarnations of the bouncing creature, 'Er*Bert is a rotund fellow with an unpleasantly large hooter. His only task in life is to bounce around the blocks of various 3D struc-

AMSTRAD • COMMODORE 64

have a fighting chance of survival.

The graphics are quite good, especially the movement of yourself and your spacecraft. But the 'monsters' float aimlessly once they are hatched and then drift out of the incubator. A bit more action wouldn't have gone amiss.

The sound though is brilliant. There are three different tunes, all of which leave you tapping your foot, and humming the tune for the rest of the day.

The game is unbelievably addictive – only a blown fuse should prevent you from continuing. Let's hope Mirrorsoft can continue to 'hatch out' more games like *Star Eggs* to keep us on the boil!!!

Adrian Ogden

PANEL POINTS

I particularly liked the graphic interlude of the earth moving through space, and the way your spacewoman climbed the ladders.

I had no complaints about the hatching screen, although I found the ship rather difficult to control in the space screen. It picked up speed too quickly. Overall, I was impressed. **Jeremy Fisher**

The egg-bashing, omelette-making part of this game is great and you have to be real fast to stop every one of those eggs hatching. The space shoot-'em-up seemed superfluous though and if it had to be included it should have been improved. Despite this I still liked the game and the cracking stage has a real lasting challenge. **Bob Wade**

The graphics depicting the heroine and the other characters are bright, colourful and well-animated. For example, her ducking movement is very smooth with no nasty flickering.

With three difficulty ratings from raw, through hardboiled, to eggspert some people may find it challenging, although for me this game held no eggscitement! **Fraser Marshall**

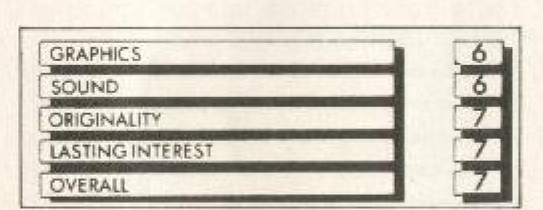
The land you pass also gains buildings, cattle grazing, trees and mountains which all further the distraction.

Bumping into the land (well, actually you seem to go through it) slows you down considerably. The ultimate disgrace occurs if you run out of time on the course. The stop watch gives a tinkle and that's the end of that game.

I felt I had to have just one more go, just to finish yet another lap, so I guess it was addictive.

Toy town graphics, high score table and the rest, definitely a good one for the family on wet Sunday afternoons.

Samantha Hemens



GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

PANEL POINTS

After staring at the staggeringly amazing graphics for a few minutes, I regained my senses and started to play this game. Unfortunately, on playability, this game falls down very, very badly. The concept of the game boils down to simply steering your boat repeatedly around the same circuit with an increasing number of obstacles. This is a shame. **Shingo Sugiura**

I've always had a fantasy about speed boats. I can just imagine myself sitting in one, skimming at high speed across some Caribbean water looking like something out of a James Bond movie.

Fortunately there is an alternative. *Jet Boat* for the Beeb has all the excitement of a high speed river race against the clock with great graphics as well.

If you don't want a fast, smooth-scrolling, addictive, exciting and genuinely enjoyable game then I advise you to leave this game well alone. If you do, then I advise you to get it at your first opportunity. **Rob Patrick**

This took so long to load, I was seriously thinking that it would be a mega-game. One to remember and tell my friends about. As it is, it's only ok. The controls were a little confusing to start off with but I soon sorted them out (really I got stuck on a bank until my time limit ran out). One useful feature was the boat's ability to cross land, go through churches and cemeteries, in fact cross anything in its path. James Bond never did this. My main gripe though is that you only get one river to terrorise. Surely, for the amount of time it takes to load, they could have added *something*. **Simon Rogers**

There's a lot of noise going on in the background, a tune (wow) AND sound effects. But both, or either, of these can be shut off by simply pressing a key – sheer luxury on the noisy Beeb. What I found interesting was the fact that you could get to the next level by pressing the @ key. If you do decide to pull this one, you'll notice your score goes up as if you'd finished the screen properly. I managed to do all 100 this way – good 'innit!

Anyway, after all's said and done, a presentable platform job, which wouldn't look amiss on anyone's shelf, but might never get played.

Samantha Hemens

GAME: BLAGGER
MACHINE: AMSTRAD
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: ALLIGATA, £7.95

This game first appeared on the Commodore 64 many moons ago, was converted to the BBC and became a PCG Hit and now finds itself reincarnated on the Amstrad in a very creditable version.

There are twenty screens, repetitive music and what the blurb calls 'a vast array of killing nasties.' The blurb's right too. As Roger the Dodger, the red-haired burglar, you will be confronted by such gruesome sights as disembodied mouths champing at the bit to devour you, homicidal sweeties, lunatic telephones and much more.

Each screen is an arrangement of platforms, conveyor belts and ladders. Roger has to work out how to collect all the keys before getting to the safe and reaching the next screen. It's not easy. Graphics and animation are very good, but the musical accompaniment is tedious. Nevertheless, a creditable version of the game.

Peter Connor

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	–
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	8

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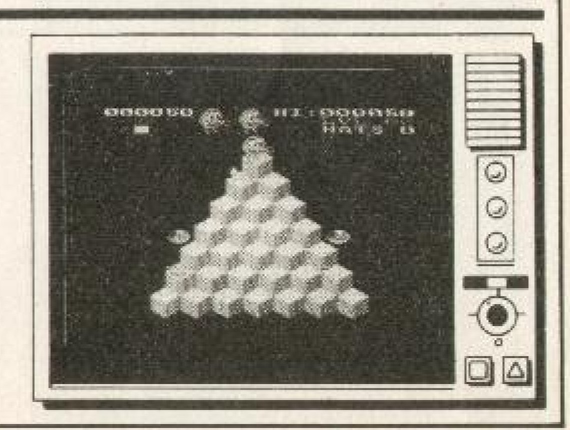
tures, changing their colour as he goes.

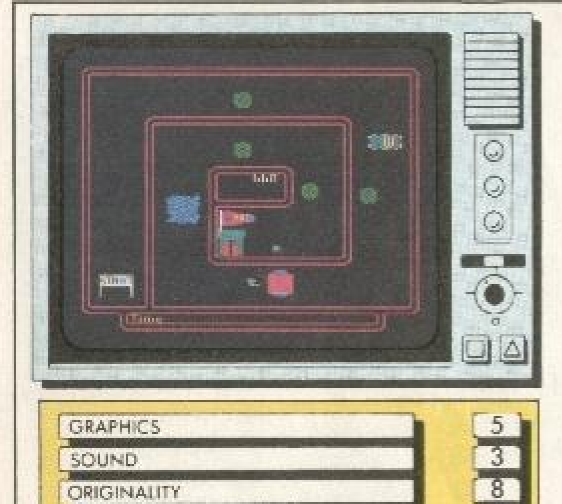
Trying to stop him are Boris the gorilla – a smugly jubilant ape – and Coily the snake. For bonus points you can steal Boris's banana, but this is a very dangerous ploy as the hairy beast gets very, very angry. Cascading balls and a black hole appearing at random are other little difficulties 'Er has to overcome.

At the side of the structures are two transporter rings which provide a means of escape back to the starting point and can also be used to lure Coily and Boris to their doom. This game is an excellent *Q*Bert* clone, with beautiful graphics and good sound.

Peter Connor

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	–
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	8





GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	3
ORIGINALITY	8
LASTING INTEREST	4
OVERALL	5

GAME: HORSE LORD
MACHINE: BBC
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: CENTURY, £7.95

For the producers of *Rocket Raid* and *Snapper*, I'd say this was a real come-down. Century claim it's colourful, zany, fast and addictive but the proof of a game is in the playing.

Colourful? Yes, but in a sort of chunky, unsophisticated way, and the gameplay is in no way going to 'glue you to the keyboard'.

Zany? Definitely! You control a green blob with a white spike which even with a great deal of imagination doesn't look anything like a horseman.

Anyway, the screen appears, with you (the blob) at the start and you follow a little track around until you reach the centre of the screen where the message you're carrying is to be delivered. Once this is accomplished, you start all over again with different obstacles.

These obstacles consist of water courses which have to be jumped, and foot soldiers who have to be killed. When you reach one of these on the first screen it dissolves into a larger representation of you and either your opponent or water course, with the water being far more deadly. You then have to



● Mr Ee — a Dig Dug derivative with lots of oomph

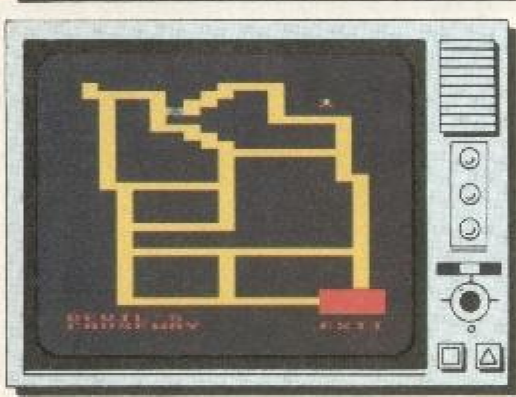
GAME: MR EE
MACHINE: BBC
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: MICROPOWER, £6.95

Have you ever been chased by an Umph? No? Well it's no fun, I can tell you. In this *Dig Dug*-derivative (what a mouthful!) they're definitely out to get you.

Taking the part of a wizard who's beautifully decked out in red with white spots, you dig your way around collecting cherries. Why he needs them is a mystery, but as we know, wizard's ways are weird and wonderful, and ours is not to ask silly questions.



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	7



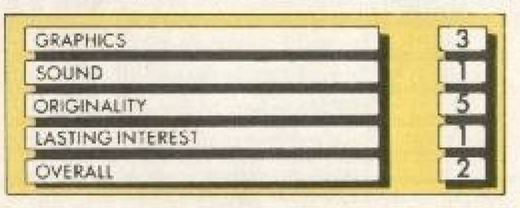
GAME: DEVIL'S CAUSEWAY
MACHINE: BBC B
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: WARLOCK SOFTWARE, £6.95

The first and probably most important thing to say about this game is that you mustn't be deceived by the packaging and the blurb. This game isn't a conventional arcade affair, it is a light-hearted educational package aimed at kids of about 10 years old.

You are cast as a soul lost in Hell and you must move along the Devil's Causeway if you wish to escape from the clutches of Satan and go free. Along the way you will encounter some rather strange people (servants of the Devil?) and these will try to trick you. This they do by setting you a problem.

For example, Simon Summer will ask you to add up a string of numbers and type in the answer in a set time. Colin Crusher attempts to crush you with a crane and to stop him you must find a letter on the keyboard. Lenny wants to kill you outright so you need to avoid his lightening and this is more a matter of luck than judgement.

Bob has a Blob and you must shoot it in under a minute or sacrifice a life. Basil the Bomber is a raving maniac and he invites you to open one of three boxes to



GRAPHICS	3
SOUND	1
ORIGINALITY	5
LASTING INTEREST	1
OVERALL	2

GAME: EWGEEBEZ
MACHINE: BBC B
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: SOFTWARE PROJECTS, £7.95

This one was written by Mat Newman, author of the excellent *Fortress*. however *Ewgeebez* bears no relation to that game.

You guide a space craft round a maze of which you can see only a small part at any one time (it's 100 screens big). Your aim is to pick up 12 crystals which will allow you to escape the maze.

Hassling you en route are a series of nasties, some of them of intriguing design, but usually you can blast them out of the way.

One which is pretty hard to get past spends its time chucking explosives all over the place. Another sends out powered probes in two directions, and you have to time your approach and shoot

RON • BBC • ELECTRON • BBC

kill or jump and if you manage it you're back to the track and on to the next obstacle. Simple.

The nasty little foot soldiers (yellow blobs with spikes) appear in several different locations. With a bush, without a bush and with a bridge, but this doesn't make much difference to the gameplay since all you have to do is shoot them with an arrow and carry on. In later levels, you even get two or three of them attacking at once.

After you've managed to pick up the rather obscure keys and work out what to do the game becomes rather easy, if not boring and you begin to wonder why you're bothering. **Samantha Hemens**

When I read the blurb for this game I thought that I was about to enter into some epic quest, an arcade adventure that would rival anything now available for the BBC. I should have realised by now that copywriters do not always tell the truth.

Supposedly, based on a novel I've never heard of, *Horse Lord* is basically a race against the clock interspersed with some fairly primitive problems. Having fought ruthless warriors, leapt wide rivers and reached the end of my quest three times, I found I was bored and no amount of blurb or coaxing could stop me

PANEL POINTS

resetting the machine and loading up *Elite*.

Rob Patrick

The author of this game is Jonathan Griffiths. Does that ring a bell? Yes, he's the man behind games like *Snapper*, *Rocket Raid* and the infamous *JCB Digger*. Well, this latest creation is original but oh – so boring.

It falls down badly on playability even though the presentation and the graphics are pleasant enough. What's happening to you Jonathan? Give us another faithful copy of an arcade game.

Shingo Sugiura

This member of the magical fraternity carries with him a crystal ball which, in desperation, can be thrown at the marauding Umphs.

Also strewn around the screen are red, juicy apples which can be toppled or pushed onto any close pursuers.

After wandering around the screen for a bit you may find that the baddies home has turned into a succulent hamburger and if you eat it the screen turns red and the Umphs will be frozen in their tracks.

This is all very well, but when the Umphs are held at bay, the Maras must play and these blue blobs with piggy yellow eyes are just as mean as the first lot of nasties. However, you do accumulate points for the seemingly pointless tactic of holding off one lot just to face the other.

Not a lot changes from level to level, except the colour of the screen and the nastiness of the monsters. There's the option of listening to the musical ditties played or blissful silence as the little wizard trundles around the screen.

The game's not particularly well presented, there's no title screen and no high score table. You'll have to record those mega high scores yourselves folks, but what does it matter when it's all so addictive you could play for hours.

Samantha Hemens

Recently, there's been a surge of *Dig Dug/Mr. Do*-type games so I expected this version to be just another second-rate rip-off, but it is a class above the rest.

It's a shame that a hall of fame or even a high score feature wasn't included, but the smooth animation, beautiful graphics, great sound effects and the sheer addictiveness of this game should keep you occupied for a long time to come.

Shingo Sugiura

This game deserves a place on the shelves of every Beeb owner in the land. It's fast,

PANEL POINTS

addictive and a thoroughly good game. The colours are bright and attractive, the animation is smooth and the sound is as noisy as anyone could reasonably want.

The game is a combination of *Pac Man* and those *Dig-Dug* games and very effective it is too. You'll need a fast hand and a good eye to win at this game . . . just the way I like it.

Rob Patrick

The graphics are fairly impressive – the Wily Wizard was cute enough to get my mum playing. Also, the game is incredibly addictive and I could play it for hours.

Simon Rogers

see if it contains a bomb. This is a matter of either pure luck or clairvoyance. There are a whole host of further freaks to be found.

As a game, Devil's Causeway isn't outstanding, in fact, if it was being sold purely on the strength of its game play you could guarantee that the manufacturers would have quite a few copies left over. However, the strength of *Devil's Causeway* is not as a game for home use but as an educational tool in primary schools. It is a valuable program that tests memory skills, mental arithmatic and keyboard familiarity in a way which is relatively enjoyable and not intimidating or patronising. **Rob Patrick**

Frankly I was appalled. A series of computer challenges of the kind programmed by kindergarten children strung together to make the most pathetic excuse for a computer game I've seen for months.

The section in which you're supposed to dodge a lightning bolt is absurd, since it's impossible to predict where it will strike. The dice game is pointless and the addition sum about as original as *Pac-Man*.

If Warlock say it's for kiddies, what are they doing constructing a scenario based around the Devil? This tape should

PANEL POINTS

be consigned to the fires of Hell forthwith.

Chris Anderson

Flicker, flicker, flicker, click, click, click, boring, boring, boring, would probably sum up this game nicely.

I know it's meant for the youngsters, but even so, I would have been disappointed if I'd typed this game in from a magazine, let alone paid for it.

In fact, if Warlock Software makes any money from this 'game', I must seriously consider going into the software business myself. I could become a millionaire.

Shingo Sugiura

carefully. The background graphics, however, are much less interesting.

I really enjoyed playing this game and found my fingers itching to map it out. The only thing is, I don't think it would take that long to solve. **Chris Anderson**

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	5
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

GAME: CRYPT CAPERS
MACHINE: BBC B
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: SOFTWARE PROJECTS, £7.95

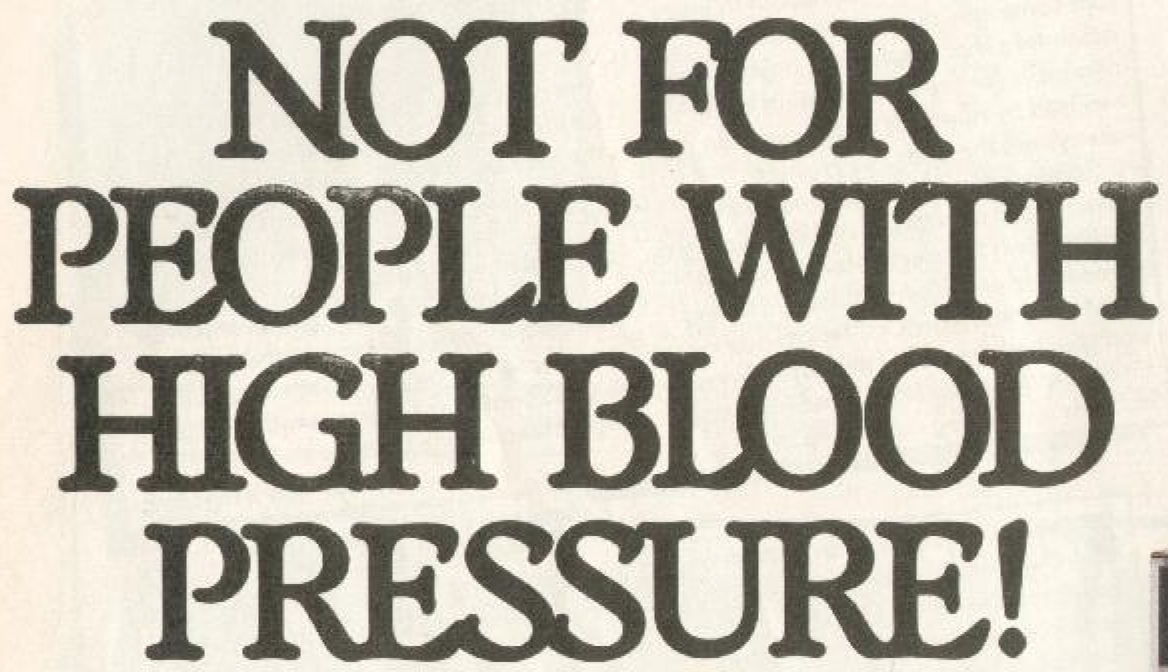
There must be a thousand and one games like this on the Beeb. You move round a maze collecting keys and treasures, but dodging or shooting the monsters.

Some monsters turn into other monsters when hit. Standard graphics and sound.

In my view, Software Projects should really have put this in their cheapo range, then it may have been worth it.

Chris Anderson

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	4
OVERALL	4



Watch out for them—these four new games could be dangerous to your health. And, as they're from A'n'F, they're second to none, calling for a level of skill that's bound to set the adrenalin racing.



SPECTRUM 48k CYLON ATTACK—Now with better than ever isometric perspective graphics (3D). **£5.75**

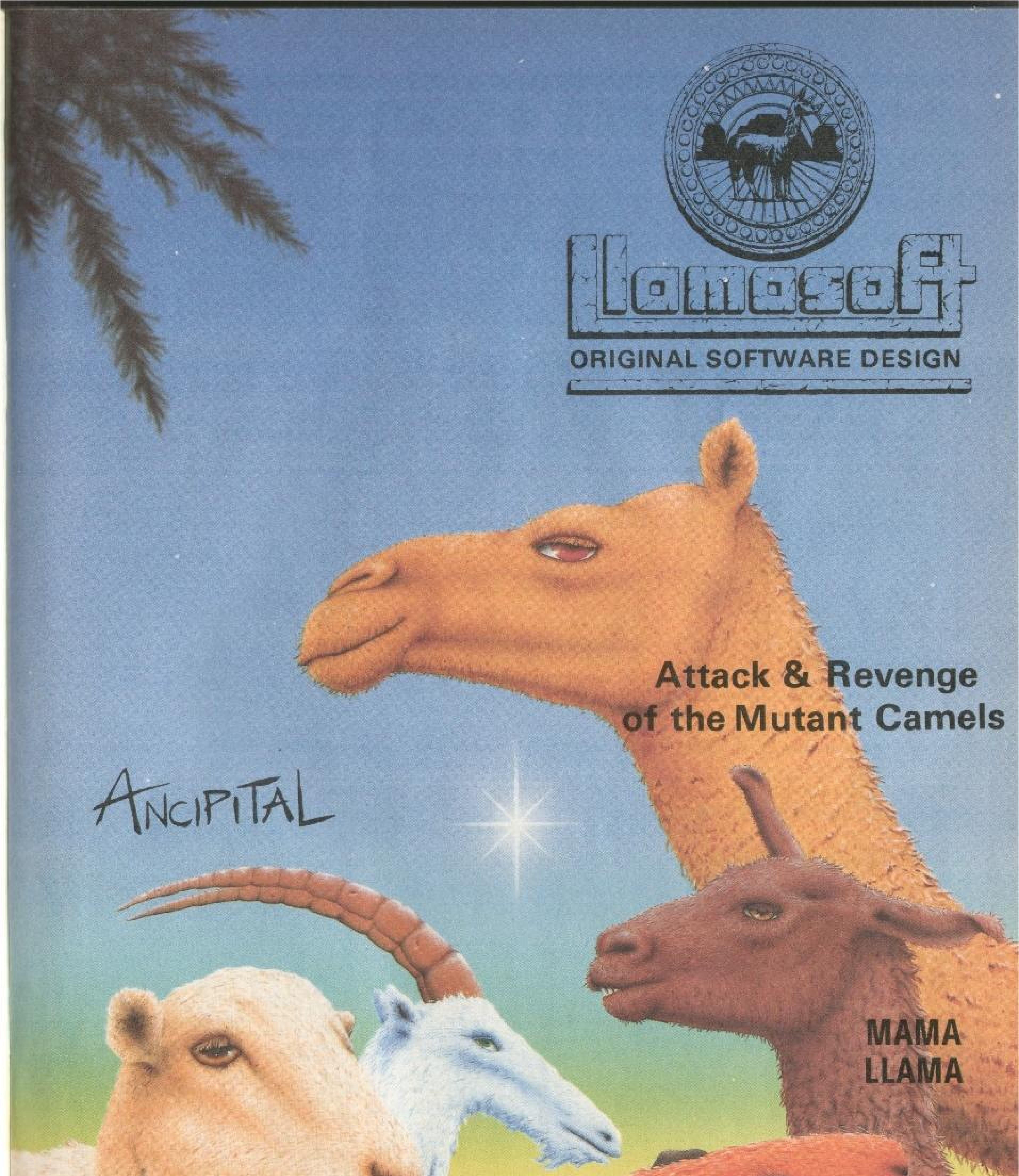
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Llamasoft
ORIGINAL SOFTWARE DESIGN
Attack & Revenge of the Mutant Camels
ANCIPITAL
MAMA LLAMA

GAME: CATEG-ORIC
MACHINE: ORIC
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: NO MAN'S LAND, £7.95

Despite being in the middle of the Pacific ocean you can stay remarkably dry with *Categ-oric*, which apart from being a clever title has nothing to do with the game.

In your unspecified warship you have to cruise around the sea looking for submarines and ships to sink while trying to stay intact yourself. To aid you in your task you have five main controls.

Pilotage shows you your speed, direction, asdic, radar and pump situation. A more detailed account of your ship's status is also available telling you what enemy shipping you have sunk so far and what state your own vessel is in.

Larger, more informative displays of your asdic (submarine locator) and radar can be used to target your weapons on the enemy.

You can use depth charges and grenades on submarines and cannon on other ships. You can also blast planes out of the sky with your machine guns.

For subs and ships you first need to find the enemy vessels' coordinates via the asdic or radar and then launch your attack, which in the case of the ships also has to be targeted by a screen cursor.

You can come under fire from all the opposition and, if hit by a sub's torpedoes, you need to quickly get to your bailing and fire pumps to save the ship. Four leaks or four fires and you'll be on your way to the bottom.

The game is very fast moving and much quicker than even a real time simulation, so there's always plenty of action. Unfortunately it is sometimes too fast and you have little chance to intervene as you are sunk yet again.

The sound effects are loud and distinctive and add to the pressure of the game.

All in all, if you've got a limited amount of money, there are better games around. **Bob Wade**

GAME: ICE CASTLES
MACHINE: DRAGON
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: MICRODEAL, £8.00

Crystal Castle from the arcades is making its debut this month on both the Beeb and the Dragon, although this is not as good as the BBC game.

The scenario is as usual, with Bently Bear in the castles collecting gems while being harassed by monsters who are either after him or the precious gems.

Each castle is made up of three-dimensional blocks which form stairways, platforms and paths, all littered with gems.

The castles can be confusing though because you can go down a pathway behind a wall but your figure remains in view. Until you visualise the perspective he appears to be wandering about in thin air. This can be very disorientating even if the hidden paths are handy for escaping from the nasties.

Gem eaters, Berthilda the witch, trees and bees are all very bad for Bently's health but can be opposed with the use of a magical hat. It appears from time to time and you can pick it up, making you invincible for a time.

To complete each screen you have to get all the gems but since the beasts can eat them as well you have to claim the last one yourself to get the bonus. Bently's hunger for honey also brings dividends, grabbing a honey pot for extra points.

Other useful features in the castles are lifts which can get you to out-of-the-way gems and special doors which, if you can enter them, will take you to a higher level.

The sound effects are very good, saving the game from total disaster, but who buys a game just for the sound?

The main problem with the game is in the control. When rushing around, the joystick seems to take on a mind of its own and automatically whips you round corners and obstacles. **Bob Wade**

PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆

Trouble in Store

This is the first Oric game I've seen that comes anywhere near providing the sort of challenge and fun given by arcade adventures on the Spectrum.

The game takes place in a department store called Harridges, a name which the Oric announces in its gruff tones when you begin play. You are the new store manager and your first day at work has been so hectic that it has left you with horrible nightmares: your attempts to empty the cash registers are constantly frustrated by hostile goods from the store's 32 departments.

On each screen you first have to collect the key before you can get to the till. This usually involves getting to the top of the screen for the key, back to the bottom for the till and then back up to the top to exit to the next department. All the time your 'promotion prospects' are diminishing and may even drop so low that you die.

Controlling the manager is very simple: left, right and jump. And here we must mention a rather curious feature of the game – you can take off from thin air! This certainly makes things a lot easier, but does seem to be bending the normal rules of such games.

Each of the 32 screens is a different department with the normally docile consumer durables on the rampage. At various times you will be squashed by an iron, blasted by a trumpet, savaged by a cheese and annihilated by the pets.

Graphics and animation are excellent and the sound makes very good use of the Oric's loudspeaker.

While *Trouble in Store* might not give *Jet Set Willy* any trouble in a Game of the Year contest, it's certainly one of the best and most enjoyable games to have appeared on the Oric in recent months. Let's hope Orpheus can keep up the standard in future releases. **Pete Connor**

PANEL POINTS

The manager in this game (you), seems to have the uncanny knack of walking on thin air! However, once you get the hang of this, the game becomes bearable, perhaps even fun.

The characters, namely you and the fatal store items, are simple but colourful. As regards sound, you can either have some rather coarse effects or one of those tunes that begins to make you cringe after a while.

There are a large number of screens (32) awaiting your approval and the game is well presented with high score table and options.

Samantha Hemens

Despite the strange jumping control this is an extremely enjoyable game and with 32 screens it's certainly no push over.

The assorted goods are well drawn and pleasingly flicker free. I liked the tune and even the sound effect of grabbing the key or till has a nice metallic ring to it.

The attempt at speech is bold and it is actually understandable, if a little pointless.

Bob Wade

Well how about that. At last a corking platform game on the Oric.

There are enough screens to keep you leaping round Harridges for months. In fact there are so many it's a pity you have to solve them all in sequence. This feature means that playing the game is bound to include plenty of frustration once you get stuck on later screens.

I enjoyed the variety of different monsters. Indeed all the graphics are pleasant and the sound gives a sharp edge to the action. Definitely a winner.

Chris Anderson

• DRAGON • ORIC • DRAGON

PANEL POINTS

I liked the sound on this game - the asdic and radar noises were very realistic. The graphics weren't bad either. But I didn't find it too playable. There were a lot of things to do, but they all happened so quickly that I didn't feel I had a real chance of taking on the enemy and winning.

Still, it's just about the only *Hunter Killer*-style game on the machine, and I suspect that seven years before the mast might give you a better chance of pronging a submarine. **Peter Connor**

What was slightly annoying was that both parties couldn't shoot at the same time. You had to wait your turn and then see whether you were hit or not.

I found it extremely difficult to shoot boats and planes using the radar facility, but the subs are easy targets, indicated on the asdic by depth and direction.

Unfortunately, the general situation board is on a pink background with green writing and is totally unintelligable, so I can't offer my opinion on that one.

The basic concept of the game would have been OK if it had been executed better, but as it is I'd forget it.

Samantha Hemens



GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	6
LASTING INTEREST	5
OVERALL	5

PANEL POINTS

This left me feeling pretty cold. Although the graphics looked promising at first sight they turned out to be unpleasantly flickery and unclear. Controlling the figure was very strange – one pull on the joystick somehow got you round several corners, a feature which destroys the whole principle of the maze game.

Peter Connor

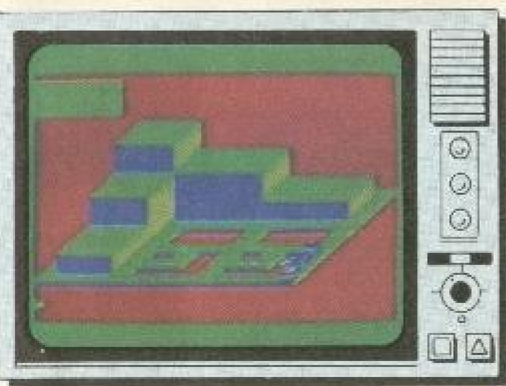
A 3D variant of dot-gobbling. It's fast with satisfying sound effects, but spoilt in my view by indistinct, garish colours and the imprecise control.

However, as in the arcade original, the different screens each require a different strategy. If you can get used to the strange graphics display in which characters remain visible even when they're behind buildings, you may find a few hours' entertainment here.

Chris Anderson

The control on this game leaves much to be desired and although it's a sound game idea, the way it's presented definitely isn't up to scratch.

Flickery, eye-straining graphics and not a lot on the sound front, I wouldn't recommend it. **Samantha Hemens**

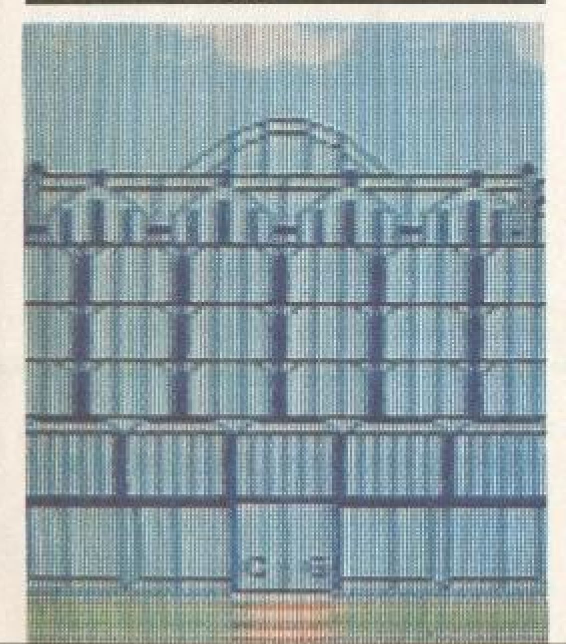


GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	7
ORIGINALITY	0
LASTING INTEREST	5
OVERALL	5

☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT•



● Good colourful graphics add to the fun

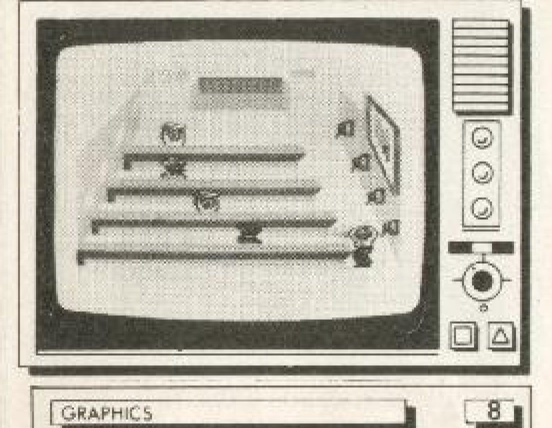




● Just one of 32 zany screens set in Harridges

GAME: TROUBLE IN STORE
MACHINE: ORIC
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: ORPHEUS, £6.95

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
ORIGINALITY	4
LASTING INTEREST	9
OVERALL	8



GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
ORIGINALITY	—
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	7

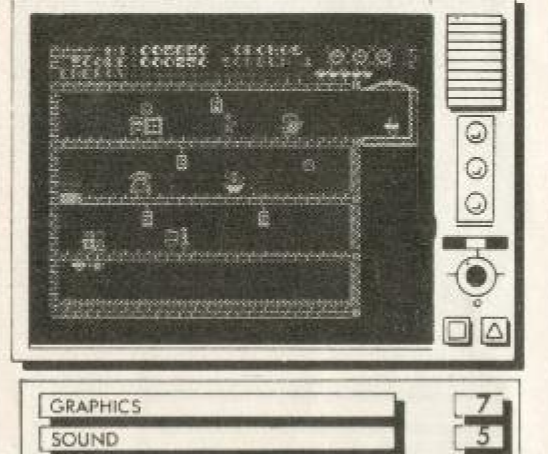
GAME: TAPPER
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: US GOLD, £9.95C, £12.95D

The action's so frenetic in *Tapper* that it comes as a surprise when you notice that all you're dispensing as the barman-hero is soda. If it's non-alcoholic, why are all those people rushing back so quickly for more? And then you realise that this micro version of the recent arcade game has been cleaned up for home consumption. In those dens of iniquity the liquid foaming out of the taps was beer.

Whatever your poison, though, the game's very attractive graphically and can prove frenetically compulsive to play. You take the role of an American bartender doing his best to keep his customers satisfied.

On each screen there are four parellel bars running from left to right. At the ends are the beer – sorry, soda – taps, where you, with your greasy hair and dapper white jacket, are positioned. You move up and down filling glasses and collecting empties with ever-increasing rapidity.

The first of the four screens is the Wild West saloon. Mean and thirsty hombres come a-stompin' in, their enormous moustaches quivering in anticipation. You fill up and sling the glasses – of soda



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	7

GAME: BILLY BLUEBOTTLE
MACHINE: SPECTRUM
CONTROL: KEYS, KEMP
FROM: POWER SOFTWARE, £5.95

You are cast as Billy Bluebottle, supposedly the sophisticated saviour of the fly world, who as well as being remarkably urbane and intelligent, is also gifted with 'Superbluebottle' strength. Unlikely? Certainly. Intriguing? Yes.

From a James Bond style cassette inlay and loading graphic we find that the game is a simple looking platforms and lifts affair patrolled by men with aerosol cans and scattered with various objects such as a kettle, an old style cooking range, a telephone and what I suppose is a water pump.

You must move Billy around in an attempt to rescue a fellow fly from the rapidly flooding basement. This you do by using the lift to move between levels and eating putrefying food to sustain your super strength.

You accumulate points by moving the various objects and knocking over your aerosol wielding adversaries. However, you must be careful not to block your route since there are fly papers hanging down and if one of the objects gets lined up with these you can't get past, possibly blocking your route to the food.

Generally, Billy is a nice enough game with some fairly pretty graphics and a comparatively original scenario.

•PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆

GAME: WORLD OF FLIGHT
MACHINE: DRAGON 32
CONTROL: JOYSTICKS (2), KEYS
FROM: MICRODEAL, £8.00

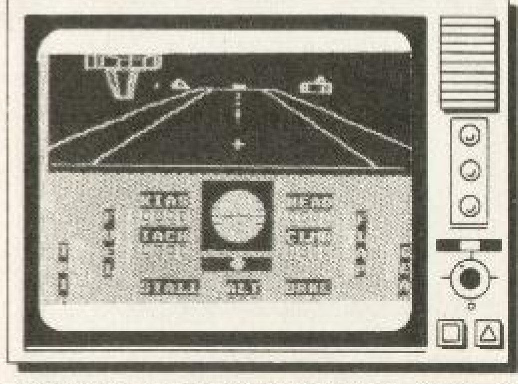
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	–
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	8

World of Flight

Yes, it's another flight simulator program. This one's a little bit different being 'view' orientated – this means that you're supposed to be able to tell where you are from the view out of the cockpit window. The landscape is shown using the presently popular wire-frame graphics, looking remarkably similar to the successful *Aviator* program on the BBC micro.

The first problem you're likely to have with this game is the need for two potentiometer joysticks. The rationale behind this is that having throttle-rudder on the left stick and elevators/ailerons on the right stick aids realism. This is all very well if you can find two joysticks, but wouldn't optional keyboard controls have been better?

The area through which you can fly your single-seater push-prop plane is quite expansive, consisting of nine 'worlds' in a 3 × 3 grid. Each world has a



different type of landscape such as mountains, Panama city (hardly any buildings), Arabian Gulf and the Practice Field.

At the start of the simulation, and whenever you crash, you may alter the weather conditions and choose the world from which you'd like to take off – useful in case you can't keep the aircraft aloft long enough to get from one world to the next.

GAME: HYPER VIPER
MACHINE: MSX
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: KUMA, £7.95

This game somehow manages to be quite compulsive despite the many drawbacks it labours under.

It's a maze game – or a 'vast labyrinth' game as the blurb prefers to call it.

The figure you control is a half-orange, half-green head which has a voracious appetite. On the menu are the various vipers snaking their way around the labyrinth – gobble them up from the rear for a really tasty meal. You can also munch fruit for bonuses and consume the odd scorpion.

Hyper Viper has very little in the way of originality or graphic interest – and the scrolling is truly horrible, especially if you choose a faster speed. Yet it is fun to play and gets very exciting after a maze or two. It's essentially *Pac Man*

ON • COMMODORE 64 • MSX

– down the bar, pronto. If they don't get a drink before they reach the end of the bar, you are grabbed round the neck and get the same treatment as the glasses.

If you can clear the bar on this screen you move on to what the instructions call 'The Jock Bar'. British players may find this a little confusing, the title does not mean a wee snug of Scotsmen, but a place frequented by sporty young Americans – jocks.

The bars this time are outside and the customers, soda-loving boys and girls, are more numerous, arriving in twos and threes. At this stage things can get busier than closing time at The Rovers Return and you'll be dying for the bell to get these under-aged soda-boozers out.

The two other screens feature a Punk Bar and Space Bar, this last doubtless frequented by aliens whose own planet's supply of soda has run out. In between screens there's a bonus game where you have to decide which of the soda cans is empty after a nasty man has switched them around.

Tapper is great fun to play and has genuine arcade standard graphics, plus some atmospheric music. Unfortunately, it only has four different screens. Despite the exciting action, this can only mean that it can't rate very highly on lasting interest. *Tapper* might be one to stick to in the arcades, where you at least get to serve Budweiser instead of that sickly soda. **Peter Connor**

GAME: ASTRO ATTACK
MACHINE: AMSTRAD
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: AMSOFT, £8.95

Well, there you are in the lair of the Rigels, and what does it turn out to be? You guessed – a maze. The game's as boring as the setting. You potter around in your ship, shooting other ships. You move very slowly and the explosions are pretty damp. **Peter Connor**

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	3
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	2
OVERALL	4

Though you won't find any startlingly original game concepts you won't end up bemoaning the lack of inventiveness. That's not to say you might not end up wanting to throw your Spectrum through the nearest window. The game is hard but perseverence will be rewarded.

An interesting aspect of the game is the foreign language feature. Instructions are provided in three languages – French, German and of course, English – and you are even told you are dead in the tongue you select. Does this mean that we are to become a nation of polyglots? Will we soon be able to say 'joystick' in Swedish, Serbo-Croat and Cantonese? **Rob Patrick**

So, you are Billy Bluebottle, the ingenious, sophisticated and dedicated saviour of the fly world. Great. Pity that's about all that the instructions tell you. I know that this is supposed to stretch the grey matter, but even in the worst adventures, they give you a better clue than 'somewhere in the basement you will find a water pump.'

As for the graphics, they were standard, and control was fairly easy- no extra hands needed for this one. The sound, despite coming from the Spectrum's pathetic speaker was good, with a very catchy tune at the beginning.

PANEL POINTS

Not a bad game, but I can imagine getting bored with it pretty quickly. **Simon Rogers**

Being a super-bluebottle doesn't really appeal to me, but this game does. It's extremely difficult to beat and has some nice ideas contained within a simple scenario.

The opening tune is good and it was a nice touch to put the multi-lingual option into the game. It's certainly tough since I didn't manage to finish screen one but it's still playable. I'm just off to polish off last weeks mouldy porridge. **Bob Wade**

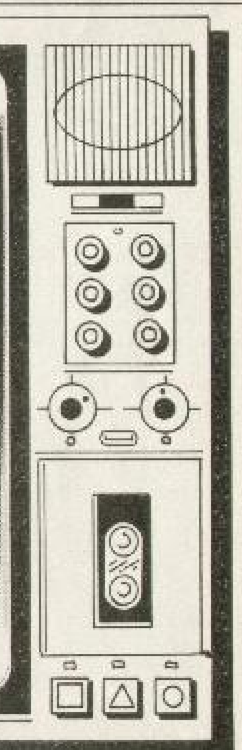
☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT•

The traditional screen layout shows your cockpit view at the top, and some instruments at the bottom. Again these could have been improved by being proper gauges instead of numerical readouts – this from somebody who still thinks digital watches are a pretty neat idea!

The wire-frame graphics forming the panoramic view out of the cockpit tend to be very jerky, but are nevertheless very impressive. Use of the cursor keys also allows you to look up, down and sideways, so you needn't worry about missing those important landscape features.

Though leaving scope for improvement, this is an extremely good flight simulation, and is well worth considering. It offers all the normal features plus many extras. And now, if you would care to look to your left, we are passing the Dahlgren Tower ... **Marcus Jeffery**

THIS IS WORLD 3
WINDS SPEED 00 FROM 000 CEILING 9999
BEGIN IN WORLD 3
X CLEARS WEATHER IN ALL WORLDS
WORLD SELECT 3
ENTER TO BEGIN
PRESS:S, F,C,B,X,



• Take to the skies with this excellent flight simulator.

crossed with *Snake*: but good computer games never die. **Peter Connor**

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	4
ORIGINALITY	2
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	5

GAME: FIRE RESCUE
MACHINE: MSX
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: KUMA, £7.95

This is a very dull game indeed. It's a ladders and platforms affair in which you have to rescue cute mice from the encroaching flames. Graphics and sound are uninteresting. **Peter Connor**

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	4
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	2
OVERALL	3

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GAME: FORT APOCALYPSE
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: US GOLD, £9.95

The first thing to be said about this game is that's it's not easy. Not that you'd want it to be, but I found it infuriatingly hard to get the hang of. Once you've done that though, you're faced with an excellent shoot-'em-up/pick-'em-up that has something of *Scramble, Blue Thunder* and *Choplifter* in its ancestry.

Your mission involves flying along a jagged landscape to the portals of the Draconis caves, entering the depths, rescuing 18 stranded men and, finally destroying the dreaded Kralthans' Fort Apocalypse.

You start off by fuelling your helicopter – and a very generous helping you get too. Using your Navatron – a radar screen at the top of the display – you blast your way to those cave doors. Android-controlled 'robo-choppers' will confront you in the air, while on the ground the Kralthan tanks emit a stream of deadly, guided drone missiles. These things are very tricky to avoid, and the tanks themselves can only be destroyed by a direct hit on their tracks.

If you can survive all this stuff flying around, you can bomb through the cave doors and enter the underworld. On the first level you must rescue nine men.

On the next level down, the Crystalline Caves, you have to rescue a further nine men before you can get through to what the program notes refer to as 'the heart of darkness, Fort Apocalypse itself', which is destroyed by one 'well-aimed missile from your rocket copter.'

Underground there are the same dangers as above, but they are fewer in number. However, you are now faced with a series of shields, doors and dangerous chambers. Figuring out how to deal with these requires as much effort as getting into the caves in the first place.

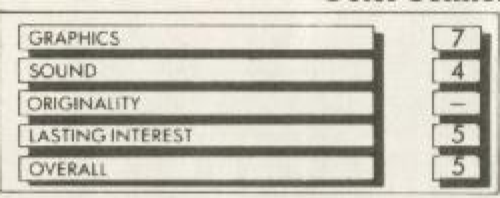
Fort Apocalypse is well-presented, but suffers from flickery graphics and less than smooth scrolling. But, despite these drawbacks, it will give a lot of pleasure to zappers of the old school.

Peter Connor

GAME: THRUSTA
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK, KEYS
FROM: SOFTWARE PROJECTS,

A conversion from a Spectrum game with some novel ideas but not really enough interest to keep you at it for very long. Some nice graphics in the monsters, but very repetitive sound.

Peter Connor



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	4
ORIGINALITY	–
LASTING INTEREST	5
OVERALL	5

GAME: AD INFINITUM
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: MR CHIP, £8.95

Just think of it, 256 different attack waves in this shoot-'em-up! Sounds great until you realise that there are only about six different attact PATTERNS – and even these aren't very impressive. Pretty boring.

Chris Anderson

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	4
ORIGINALITY	2
LASTING INTEREST	3
OVERALL	3

GAME: COMBAT LYNX
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: KEYS
FROM: DURELL, £8.95

Not as good as the Spectrum version – which we made a hit in November. Without the spectacular 3D effect to spur your interest, the awesome complexity of the simulation is likely to prove too much.

Chris Anderson

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	3
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	6
OVERALL	6

•PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆

Spy vs Spy

This is a game based entirely on a comic strip that appears in the popular American magazine Mad. In the cartoon, two spies are forever feuding using bombs, dynamite, guns and other deadly utensils to defeat one another, and walk off with the secrets.

Beyond are marketing this game which faithfully reproduces much of the exciting action between the White Spy and the Black Spy.

Sounds interesting? Here's how it's done: Firstly, a special routine has been developed to allow both players (the two spies) to see exactly what the other is doing.

There are two major options: two human players, with two joysticks, or one player against the computer, which has a variety of intelligence levels.

The basic idea of the game is to control your spy, finding the four secrets and the briefcase in which to carry them.

They are scattered around an embassy of between six and 32 rooms, and are hidden in a variety of places, behind TVs, pictures, filing cabinets or numerous other objects in each room. When all are collected, the spy must find the special exit-door and from there he is taken to the airport, where a plane is waiting. Off he zooms!

Thus, the winner of this duel is determined.

But greatly complicating this 3D arcade-style exploration game (what a mouthful!) is the presence of each spy's 'trapulator'. This allows each spy to set any one of six traps by two quick presses of the fire button. What is more, the spies can also have sabre-fights with each other – ouch! When one of the spies is killed, either by trap or sabre, he becomes an angel and floats gently upwards!

PANEL POINTS

A very entertaining program, which – surprisingly – really did have some of the flavour of the cartoon. I can't say I found it any too easy to play, even on the lowest level. I'm obviously far too honest to be a spy.

The sequences where the spies with the overgrown schnozzles bash each other over the head are very funny, but I never quite got the hang of laying those booby traps.

Bob Wade

At last there is an arcade style game where skill is more important than good reactions. Don't be put off by the lengthy instructions, this is a great game once you get the hang of it. My seven year old brother soon picked it up and loved it.

The graphics are excellent. The noses of the spies make Barry Manilow's look microscopic!

Two players being able to play the game simultaneously is a superb idea. I could sit and watch it play itself in demonstration mode all day!

Steven Filby

An instantly appealing game. Lots and lots of new and imaginative ideas, the best of which was two people playing simultaneously in different locations. I howled with laughter every time the computer walked into one of my traps, superb idea.

It's fiendishly difficult at first but excellent graphical animation, prettily drawn cartoon-style spies, and easy on the ear original music made every moment really good fun. This is the best game I've seen on the '64 in ages.

Simon Chapman

ODORE 64 • COMMODORE 64

PANEL POINTS

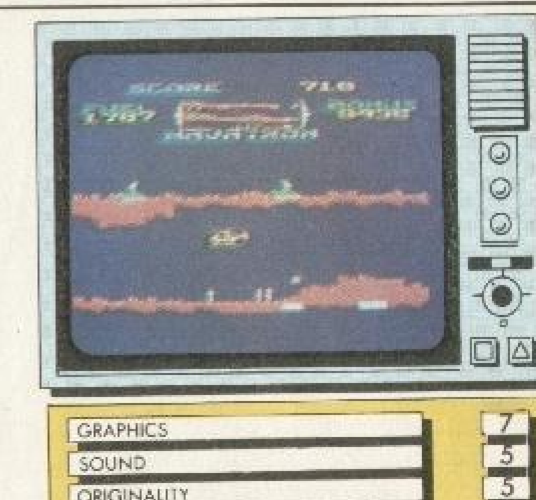
This is a shoot-'em-up game requiring close joystick control and a vicious streak.

Graphics are large and colourful on the whole, but perhaps lacking in detail. Sound is brash and healthy; with plenty of white noise scattered around. Control is fairly good with the joystick, even though at some stages of the game it is a little too easy too lose lives. **Steve Spittle**

The game is reasonably good but it didn't have me glued to the TV screen for long. There is nothing stupendously new or exciting about it. It is essentially an underground *Choplifter* but there's always something happening on screen so you may enjoy it. **Simon Chapman**

Fairly detailed and smoothly scrolling graphics give the game that much realism over others of this type on the market. (Your chopper is even affected by gravity!). Pretty good sound.

On your way to destroy the fort, you will encounter some very difficult hazards. It can be very frustrating being destroyed halfway through your quest and having to work all the way back. **Jeremy Fisher**



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	5
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	6

GAME: SKYLINE ATTACK
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: CENTURY, £7.95

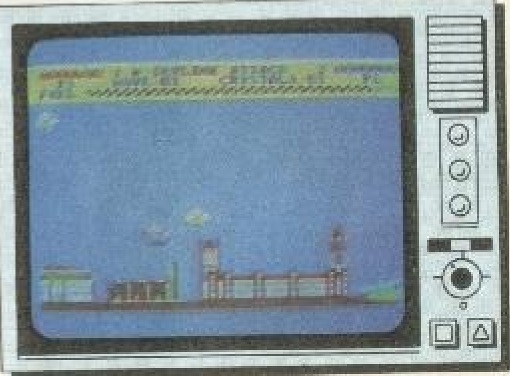
This program comes on a superb fast loader. It actually allows you to play the old arcade game *Snake* while you're waiting for the load to complete.

Skyline Attack is a fairly rudimentary shoot-'em-up, in which you fly an aircraft along a horizontally scrolling landscape. You can fly in both directions, and the landscape wraps round, giving it a similar feel to Virgin's *Falcon Patrol*.

What makes this different is that the landscape is made up of a series of well-known city skylines. London includes an extremely recognisable London Bridge and St. Paul's, while Paris has the Eiffel tower, and so on.

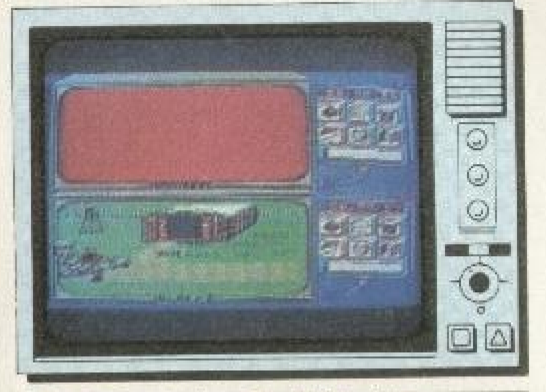
To see the rest, you have to shoot aliens followed by the fuel pods they give off. These then form crystals which you have to try to collect. Each time you do, you move up an attack wave, and your landscape expands.

There are some nice touches – like the giant frogs attacking Paris. Revenge for all those amputated frogs legs, I suppose. A pleasant enough game, and certainly pretty to look at. But I'm afraid to say, I preferred the free game of *Snake*. **Chris Anderson**



GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	5
ORIGINALITY	5
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT•



The plane takes off with the victor

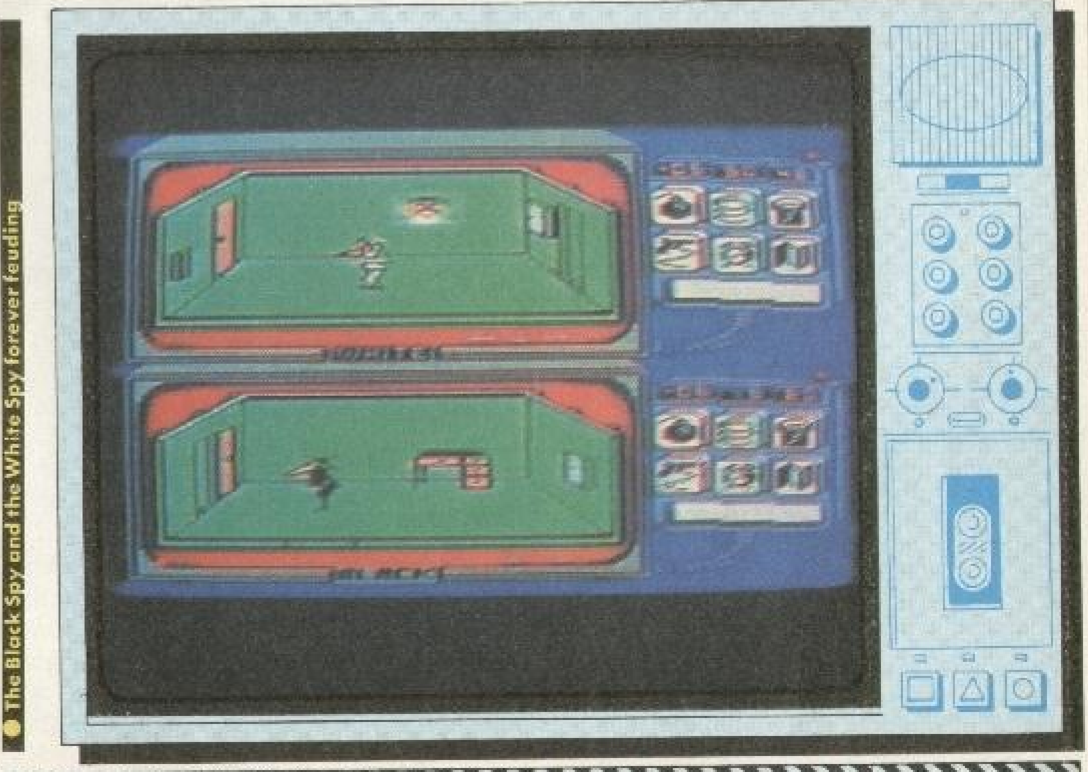
In fact, the only real limiting facor as far as spies are concerned is the time-limit: dying merely subtracts from the time left.

The split-screen gaphics are very good – watch the spies laughing – and in the background a tune plays menacingly. The game is great fun when played with two people, and becomes a battle of wits! The trapulator is VERY handy, I find.

However, I have a slight reservation in that the game might seem too difficult if only ever played with one joystick.

It is really hard going playing against the computer and you'll be lucky if you win any bouts of combat. But its worth the investment for a second!

Richard Patey



The Black Spy and the White Spy forever feuding

GAME: SPY vs. SPY
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: BEYOND, £9.95

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
ORIGINALITY	9
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	8

The Staff of Karnath

My first reaction to this game was one of slight disappointment. We'd been waiting so long for Ultimate to release a title on the '64 that the pictures which finally appeared on screen seemed a slight anti-climax.

The main character, Sir Arthur Pendragon, and most of the ghoulish creatures he faces don't have the same graphic brilliance of their equivalents in Ultimate's Spectrum titles. Although nicely animated, their shapes seem a little unclear. Yet once you get into it, the game is superb.

The idea is familiar. You have to explore a castle to find 16 pieces of a key or 'pentacle'. Each of these must be taken, one by one, and placed in an obelisk. Once the key is complete, it will allow you to destroy the evil staff hidden by the ancient sorcerer, Karnath.

The game's most striking feature is the way you explore the castle. The rooms are depicted in 3D and also link up to each other in 3D. So a room may have doors to the left and right, front and back, and also stairways up or down.

The rooms look extremely realistic, built out of solid stone-work and furnished with tables, four-poster beds and other suitable items. There are, I understand, only about 40 locations, but some of them are larger than the size of a single screen and almost all contain a vile resident creature.

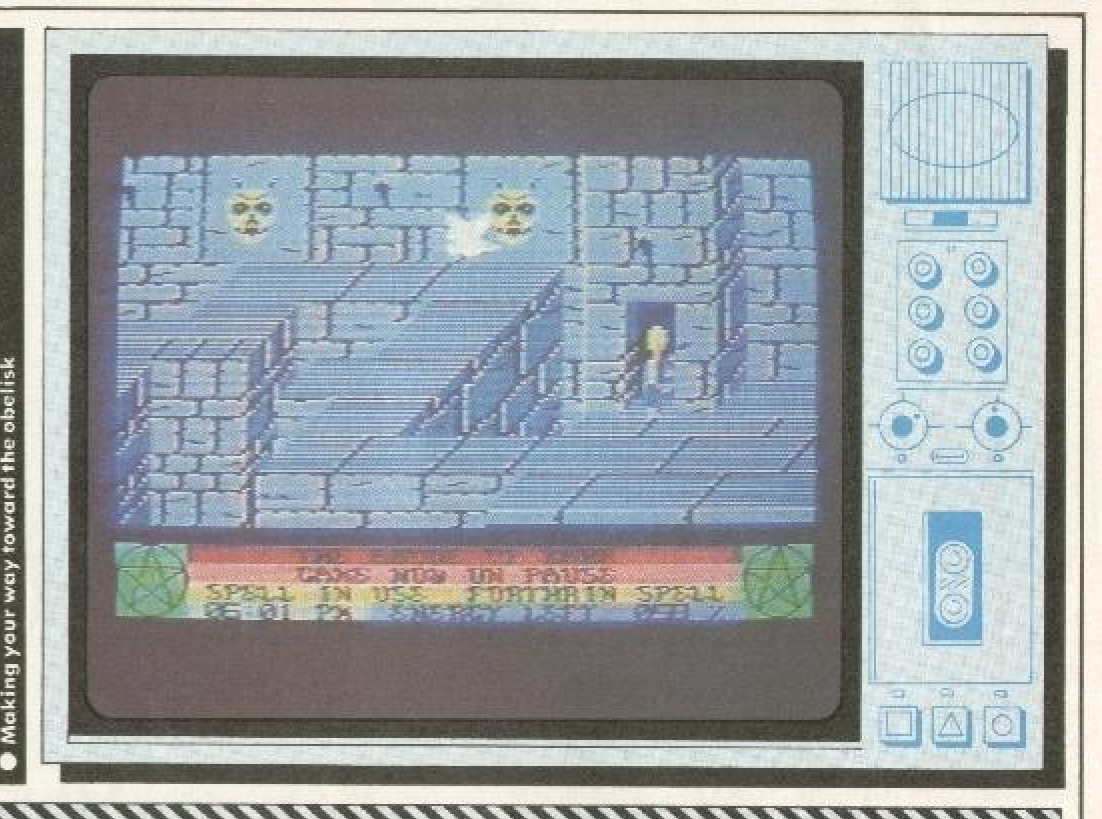
The horrors include skulls, vampires, spiders, snakes, witches, ogres, giant toads, ghosts, and hooded monks. And the sound effects which accompany each one are very spooky. Don't play this game alone with the volume up high – it'll scare you to death!

Your main weapon against the evil creatures is a magic ring which gives you access to a dozen different spells with names like Barracata and Ibrahim. Only one spell has an effect on any one creature, so you have to find the right one by repeatedly pressing a key to change the spell, and then firing at the creature.

It's important you work out what each of your spells is for, because at the end you have just one chance to use a spell against the staff – probably one which you've found no other use for.

But you may have to play the game for some time before you discover how to use some of the more exotic features such as flying carpets and secret compartments. Without these you'll never collect all the parts you seek.

I guess it's fair to say *Staff of Karnath* isn't going to hook everyone. But I found it an impressive piece of software with enough depth, variety and orginality to keep me exploring those haunted halls for hours. **Chris Anderson**



● Making your way toward the obelisk



GAME: THE STAFF OF KARNARTH	
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64	
CONTROL: JOYSTICK	
FROM: ULTIMATE, £9.95	

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	9
OVERALL	9

PANEL POINTS

A beautiful game that more than lives up to expectations; in my mind it is definitely one of the best.

The animation of both nasties and Sir Arthur Pendragon is superb – watch the latter's legs and arms pumping as he races off to find yet another piece of the pentangle (makes a little difference from 'keys', don't you think?).

The sound effects are average, but the title screen tune makes up for this in part. To play this game requires a lot of thought and considerable dexterity.

Richard Patey

A superb game. The attention paid to background detail and quality of scrolling was a sheer delight to watch. The background graphics and variety of nasties to beat kept me entranced. It was more like watching a film at times! Looks definitely beatable and so a complusive challenge to all. Not as many rooms as I'd have hoped for but I enjoying every nanosecond! How do they do it!?

Simon Chapman

At last, the long awaited game for the '64 from Ultimate, and wasn't it worth waiting for?! Incredible 3D scrolling graphics and excellent sound effects make this graphical adventure something really special, and worthy of the acclaim given to some of Ultimate's previous releases on the Spectrum.

The rooms of the castle are beautifully drawn, and their inhabitants, be they frighteningly real or comically abstract, are all graphically superb. Especially effective are the grinning skulls, oh – and the bird which deals with you in its, er, own special way!

The Staff of Karnath will keep you occupied for hours.

Rob Patrick

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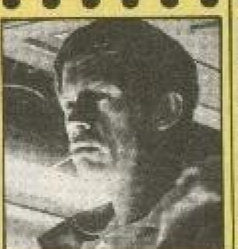
A L I E N



In space no one can hear you scream.



NAVIGATOR
Shy, Skilful and Intelligent — Panics Easily.



EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Direct, Imaginative, Cautious, Loyal.



SCIENCE OFFICER
Secretive, Unlikeable, Brilliant — Occasionally Illogical.



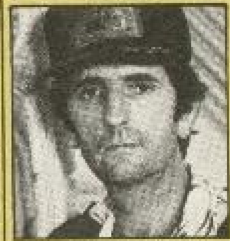
CAPTAIN
Solid, Dependable, Courageous — Excellent Leader.



ENGINEERING OFFICER
Physically Strong, Low I.Q. Potentially Rebellious



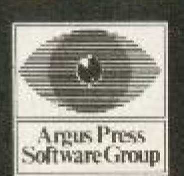
3RD OFFICER
Wilful, Ambitious, Authoritative, Resourceful.



ENGINEERING OFFICER
Cynical, Rebellious, Untrustworthy, Unflappable.

THE CRE
Personnel files follow yours to command well almos

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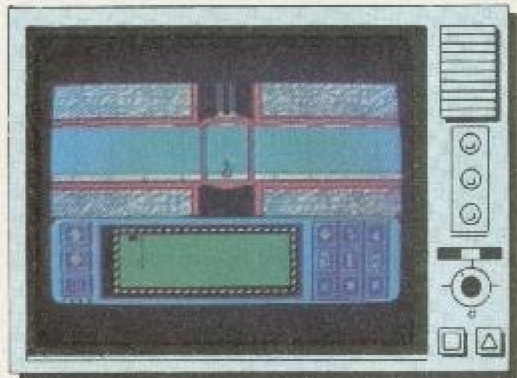
Featuring the unique Personality Control System

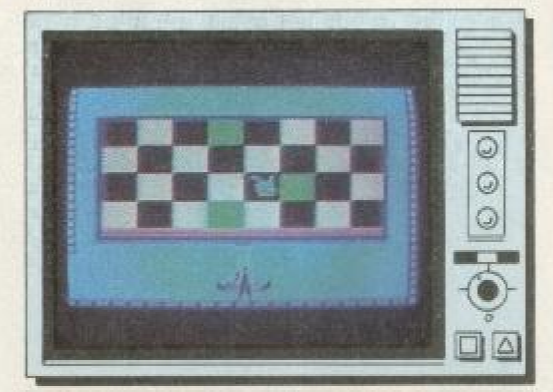




GAME OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 1985

IMPOSSIBL





▲ The lift (top) and the computer display (bottom)
► There are 32 rooms packed with death-dealing robots

You're hunched over your trusty Commodore late at night. The lights are low, your eyes are glazed, when suddenly, as if from nowhere, a blood-chilling voice rings out:

'AHA!! ANOTHER visitor!! Stay a while . . . Stay . . . FOREVER!'

You grip the joystick fiercely . . . On the screen a man leaps from an elevator shaft and runs down a lonely corridor, his footsteps ringing out through the empty building. Ahead of him lies an incredible test of endurance, intelligence, and agility in a battle for the survival of the human race . . .

Yes, you're playing *Impossible Mission*. You've been playing it non-stop for the last eight hours. You're tired, you're tense, but, oh boy – are you hooked! This game has it all. Brilliant animation, superb speech synthesis, excellent graphics, and one of the most difficult, thrilling scenarios ever to flash across your TV screen.

Here are your orders: Elvin Mindbender, computer genius, has built a vast underground stronghold, comprising 32 chambers all patrolled by intelligent robots. From this stronghold, he has succeeded in breaching the security of military computer installations and is about to trigger off World War III single-handed.

As Agent 4125, you start your mission in a lift, suspended above an empty shaft. A hideous voice sneers out a welcome, and then you tug on the joystick to start the lift on its descent. As soon as it reaches a floor it stops and you leave the lift to run towards the first chamber . . .

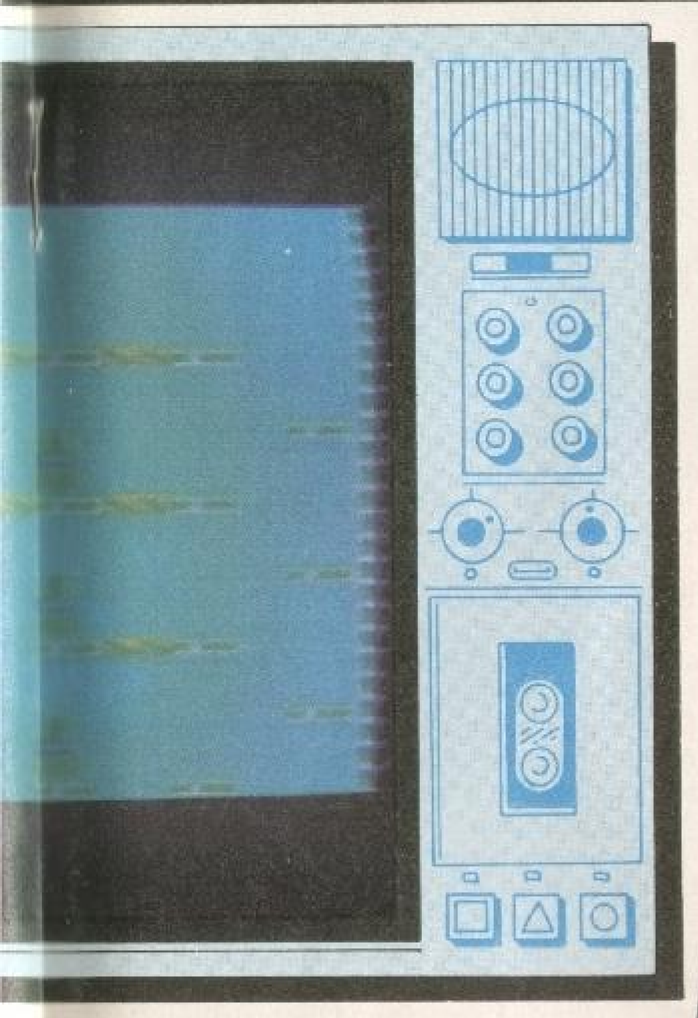




ODORE 64 • COMMODORE 64

E MISSION





PANEL POINTS

Am I imagining things or is the 64 games market being over-run by the Americans? *Impossible Mission* from Epyx, deservedly well known for their *Summer Games* program, is yet another high-quality import.

Sporting some superb graphics, this multi-screen game is a real winner. Not only are there a large number of actual game graphics, there is also a separate section which, using Macintosh style icons, allows you to manipulate parts of the puzzle.

A really good game which deserves a place in any self respecting software collection.

Rob Patrick

This has to be the ultimate platform game, forget *Jet Set Willy* and *Manic Miner*, they're nothing compared to this somersaulting, walking, talking, all-action game.

The animation is fantastic and the search for objects and the solving of puzzles make the game tough as well. You've even got the marvellous speech without any hardware add-ons, and following the trend of *Ghostbusters* your computer gets the chance to laugh at you.

Bob Wade

Apart from the incredible speech, animation and sound effects, this game has a real challenge to offer. It may appear, at first, that only those with 19 brains and a degree in metaphysics would be able to understand the finer points of the game. But in time the clouds will pass leaving hours of fun in front of you.

Alan Green

The scream this game emits when you plunge to your death from a platform is so terrifying, the program should be X-rated. The speech uses the same remarkable programming as that in *Ghostbusters* except that here the evil professor has a very English accent. It's astounding – as is the quality of the animation. The game itself is extremely convincing thanks to the attention to detail. Trapped in the professor's labyrinth of rooms, lifts and security codes you really do begin to feel like a secret agent.

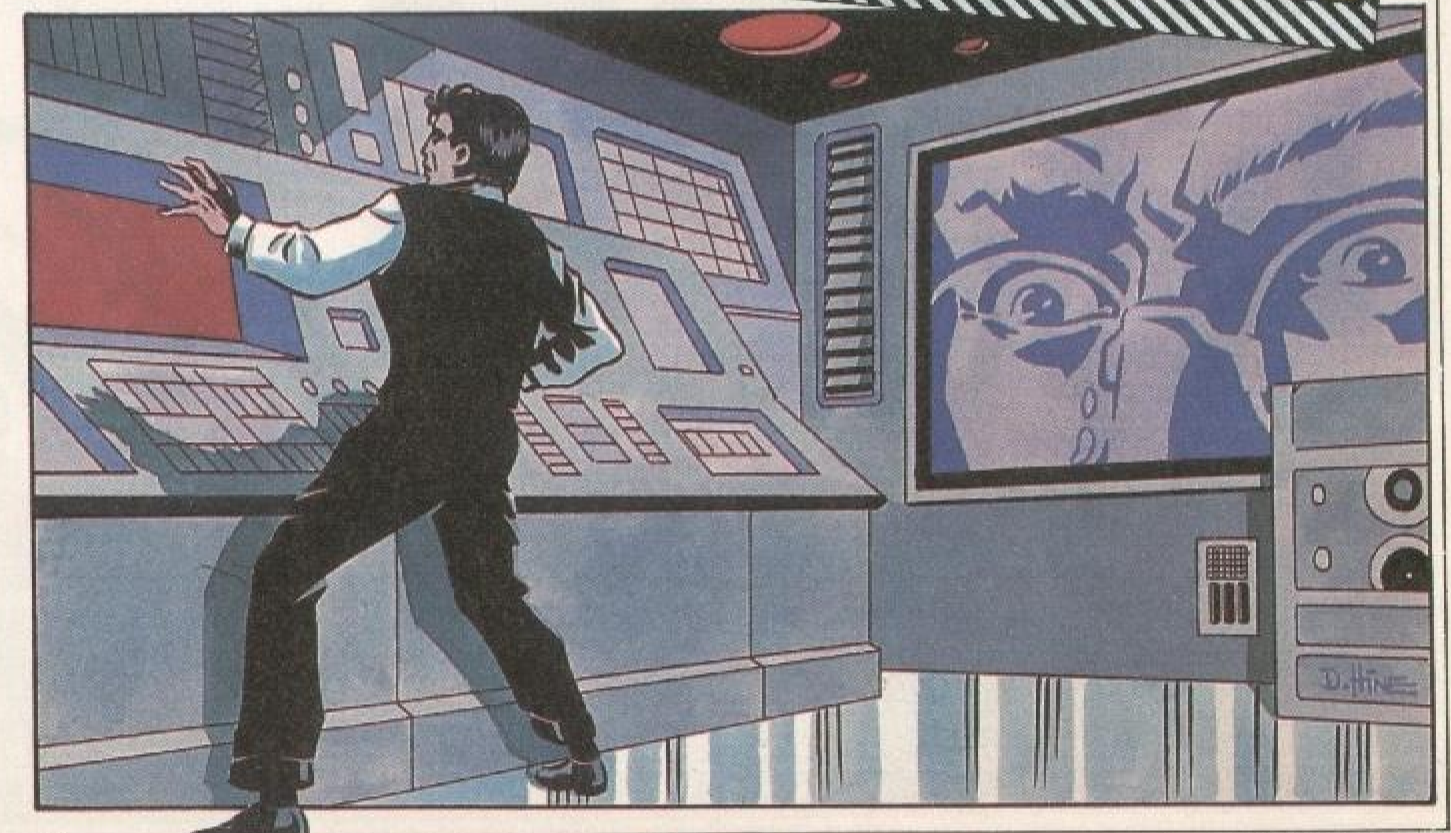
Chris Anderson

GAME: IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: CBS, £8.95 C, £11.95 D

GRAPHICS	10
SOUND	10
ORIGINALITY	8
LASTING INTEREST	9
OVERALL	10

At this point, if you've never played the game before, you'll probably be gasping at the quality of the graphics and animation. This guy really RUNS – he bounds down the corridor with all the spring and confidence of a real







athlete. Even the sound of his footsteps is astonishingly realistic.

There's no doubt about it, the visual effects on this game are absolutely unbeatable. If games improve much more on this then no-one will watch TV any more, they'll just load up a program instead.

But there's more to come . . . Once he reaches the first chamber, your hero finds himself confronted by a collection of platforms, patrolled by excellently designed robots, which he crosses by . . . wait for it . . . executing the most perfect somersaults you'll ever see outside a gymnasium!

Each room in the complex is joined to the others by a network of short passages and lift shafts. The lay-out is different each time you play. The rooms serve different purposes for their owner – some have beds in, others have desks, or banks of computer equipment and consoles. Some platforms are joined by lifts and most are guarded with frightening efficiency by robots.

Your task is to search every item of furniture and equipment for a series of puzzle pieces, which once collected and correctly assembled will enable you to break into Mindbender's network and save the world. Different items of furniture require different amounts of time to search and this is indicated by a little bar displayed above your head that shortens as your search nears its end.

Often you'll come away unrewarded, but sometimes you'll pick up a puzzle piece, or perhaps a special control code that will enable you to freeze the robots in a room or reset the lifts (essential if you've fallen from a platform and can't get back up again).

Just getting the pieces is difficult enough. Although all the robots look remarkably similar, they all behave differently. Some have regular movement patterns, others irregular. Some fire lasers, others don't. Some even stand there looking threatening until you approach them, whereupon you realise that they've broken down! Others PRETEND to have broken down, but if you get too close. . .

Playing Impossible Mission

Although the principle of this game is beautifully simple, the challenge is enormous. The limited time available, combined with the fact that the game is different each time, makes game-play complex and compelling.

First you need a good 'maze-sense' to cover the 32 different rooms using the most efficient route. You also need to develop a good knowledge of robot psychology, and make efficient use of your 'snoozes' (which temporarily freeze the robots).

Second, you need razor-sharp reflexes and careful 'jump judgement'. You may have an infinite number of lives, but you lose a lot of time if you get killed. Finally, if you succeed in collecting all the puzzle pieces, you need a fast, analytical approach to arrange them in the correct order before the time runs out.

But the real joy of this game is that even if you don't get very far, playing it is still tremendously exciting and highly addictive. So get to it, gamesters – prove it's not 'impossible'!

In between rooms, you can use your network computer which displays a map of the underground network, the amount of time you have left, and – if required – can display and sort out the puzzle pieces you have collected, with a bit of help from yours truly of course.

You can also use the computer to halt the game between rooms and even to call for help, whereupon you will receive guidance on the construction of the puzzle and whether or not you need more pieces. There is, however, a time penalty for using the helpline and also for being killed by robots or falling through holes in the floor (accompanied by a horribly realistic cry of despair).

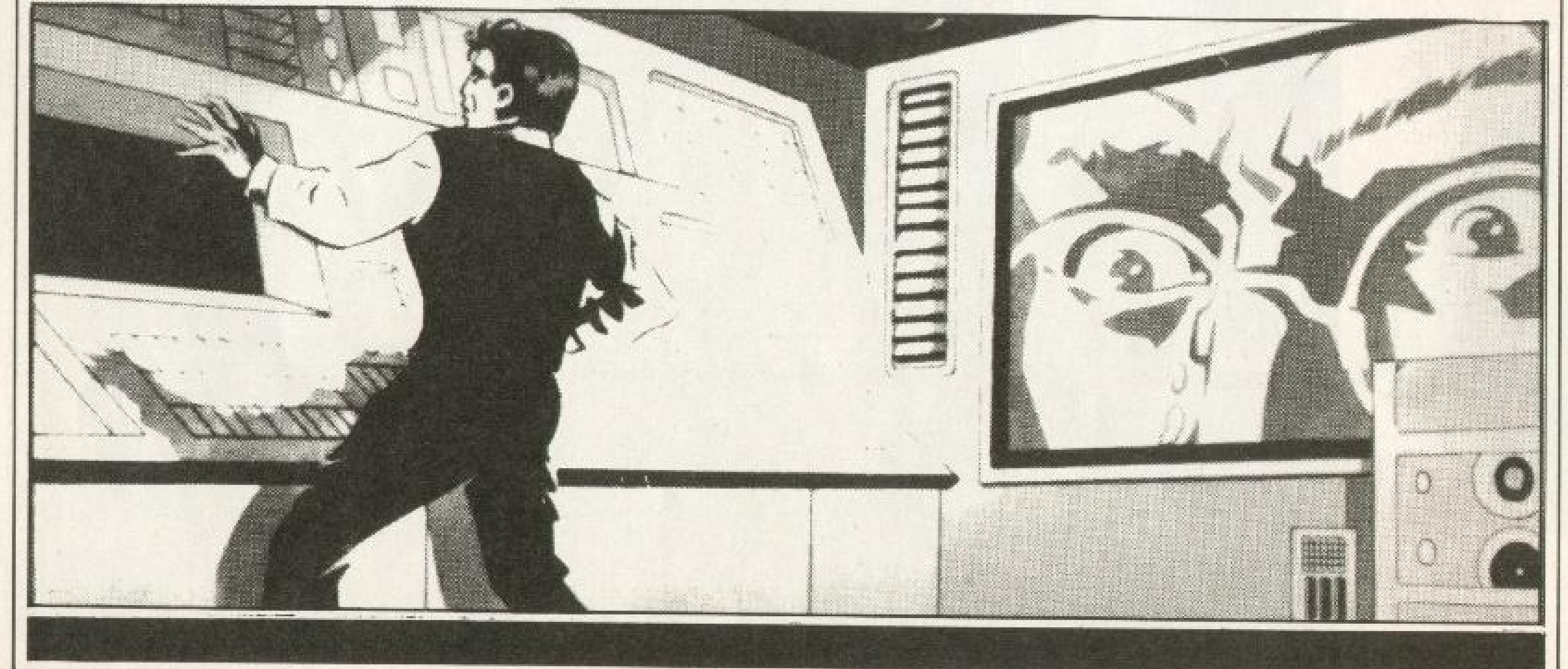
Some screens feature a vast computer console laid out rather like a chess board. Operating the console will reward you with a series of musical tones associated with different flashing squares. A hand then appears on the screen, which you must use to point to the different squares in order of ascending notes. Do this correctly and you are rewarded with a bonus control code.

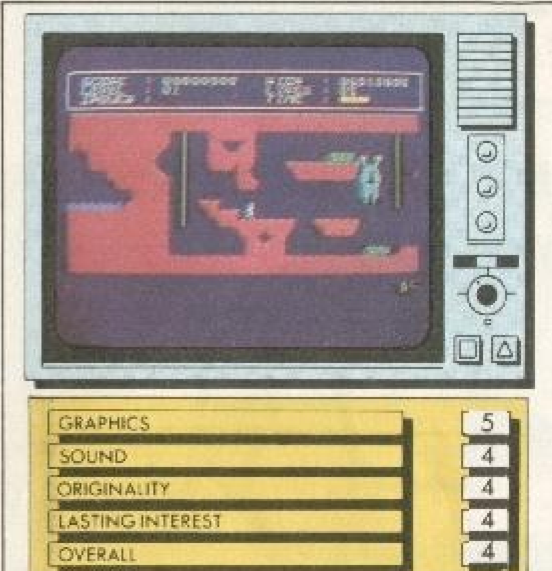
Every room requires different tactics. Some rooms have no furniture at all, others are patrolled by a giant beach ball that kills on contact, others involve careful use of lifting platforms to reach the most promising areas. You have an infinite number of lives, but the more you get killed the less time you have to complete the game.

The speech is superb. Sometimes, on entering a room, the computer will greet you with the icy words 'Destroy him, my robots'. Other nice touches include a hi-score table that saves itself automatically on the disk version and the way the game is arranged completely differently each time you play.

Impossible Mission has the graphics, the animation, and the speech that you've always dreamt of. This truly brilliant piece of programming will keep you running and somersaulting through the night, every night, for many nights to come.

Steve Cooke





GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	4
ORIGINALITY	4
LASTING INTEREST	4
OVERALL	4

GAME: CAVE FIGHTER
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: BUBBLE BUS, £6.99

This game is a great disappointment. The packaging trumpets its virtues as 'an all action, jumping, climbing and shooting game with 31 different caves to explore.'

What you don't get told is that the configuration of the caves is very similar, with only colours and the number of aliens changing. This might be forgivable if there were some outstanding – or even merely good – gameplay to be had.

Unfortunately, these caves are far from exciting places. Up ropes and on to ledges you go – but why? The game doesn't provide any kind of scenario, or even a name for the character you control. You can't help feeling that someone messing around in caves full of aliens should be left to his own devices.

Movement takes a while to get the hang of. You lose a life if you walk into any area of raised ground, which sometimes makes it difficult to position yourself correctly under a rope. Jumping is easy enough once you've realised that you must keep an eye on the strength meter and keep it up for the high jumps.

The aliens aren't a bad-looking bunch; some whirr rotors, some crawl



● Keep low to dodge the guided missile – then climb to get over the wall

GAME: RAID OVER MOSCOW
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: US GOLD, £9.95

ZAP those Reds right where it hurts the most! DROWN in a tidal wave of American patriotism, paranoia and propaganda! Yes, folks, the Cold War's really hotting up and you can play your very own part in it with this tasteless game from US Gold.

Your mission is nothing less than to prevent a Soviet nuclear attack on American cities, and then lead a commando squadron in an attack on the Russkies' Defence Centre. 'If you are successful', the blurb crows, 'you will set Soviet military strength back ten years!' Ho hum.

But if you can forget this gruesome scenario and sit through the Stars and Stripes while the game loads, you'll discover a rather enjoyable five part shoot-'em-up.

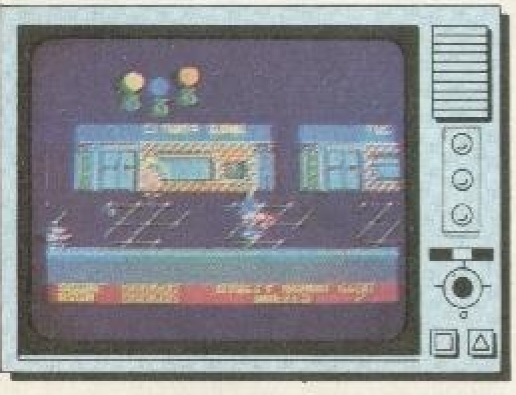
First, you get a view of the northern hemisphere with the missiles winging their way from Minsk to Miami. In a few minutes they'll detonate and the game will be up. So it's time to scramble some planes.

Into the hangar you stride, purposeful, brave and with something of John Wayne's unsteadiness. You get into a plane and take off, heading for the doors. Then you crash. It takes quite a few goes before you get the hang of thrust and inertia and can make it to the stratosphere.

You swoop down, in this second part, to a *Zaxxon*-style zap. Hopping over hedges and walls you blast tanks and buildings while avoiding the guided missile on your tail. Survive this and you get a crack at the missile silos. This is the most tedious part of the game – you just have to fire into the slits.

Next comes the Defence Centre in Moscow. Armed with a mortar you attack the building – which bears a strange resemblance to the Kremlin. You have to shoot all the soldiers and tanks, and hit all the doors, before you're allowed onto the last stage – the Reactor.

Once in the Reactor you must kill the fiendishly clever Red robots with your disc grenades. The robots are invulner-



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
ORIGINALITY	7
LASTING INTEREST	4
OVERALL	6

GAME: PC FUZZ
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: JOYSTICK
FROM: ANIROG, £7.95

Comical coppers are a great British tradition, and *PC Fuzz* is an attempt to carry this on in computerised form – even though Fuzz himself looks as if he's escaped from a Victorian episode of Dixon of Dock Green.

Fuzz is an avant-garde bobby, despite his appearance: he no longer plods his beat, but pedals it on his unicycle. According to the blurb, things had been pretty quiet – until the Mob arrived in town. And the punks, and the drunks. There's so much evil around that PC Fuzz could go for a world-record number of arrests.

The game starts with some very soothing music to accompany our hero's progress along the main street. On his way he goes past such renowned hostelries as The Rampack and Anirog Inn. Out of these drinking dens pour the town drunks, crazily swaying from side to side and getting in the way of more serious matters.

The Listings Bank and the Memory Bank are very popular with the new villains. As they emerge with their swag they release bombs. You can either jump over these or send your truncheon out to explode them. This weapon can also be sent up to prang the balloons bearing



like slugs, and there are even bullet-firing flowers. But yer man is a pretty uninteresting figure who insists on performing a celebratory jig every single time he shoots something.

The game does become a little more interesting after level 20 or so: the aliens are more numerous and the task of shinning up ropes and landing on ledges becomes more demanding.

Cave Fighter really is not the sort of game that's going to thrill you through those long winter nights. Its graphics are too simple to make it a visual treat, its sound is horrible and horribly boring and the gameplay is dull. Speleologists beware. **Peter Connor**

PANEL POINTS

This is an unimpressive jump and climb game with a claimed 31 levels. Most of the levels appear to be variations on a theme, with the scenery being much the same. Control is a little tricky as it employs a strength meter for jumping, which means you having to hold your joystick fire button down for varying periods of time to determine the distance you leap; this is a very time-consuming activity, which makes game-play rather tedious. **Steve Spittle**

Cave Fighter reminded me a bit of *Boogaboo* except instead of a flea, you are a human who has to escape from the caverns. It is tricky to control the jumping and shooting since both use the fire button. It also annoyed me that if I walked into a wall I would lose a life, since I doubt if that would happen in real life! It is better than *Boogaboo* however. **Steve Filby**

After the nice little theme from 'Chariots of Fire', I embarked onto the ropes and platforms. There is little variation on each of the 30+ levels and 99 lives made it tedious. For me there was not much of a long term challenge. **Simon Chapman**

PANEL POINTS

Another game from US Gold on the war theme, and I think this will have much more success and a bigger impact than their previous blockbuster *Beach Head*. A different idea made brilliant by the graphics and smooth scrolling of the screen, the planes and also of the bird's eye view of the ground. It is also good in the sense that the game offers several different tasks. **Adrian Ogden**

This one from the land of baseball and mom's apple pie, lets us Brits indulge in another American passion – commie bashing. Politics and morals aside, a game like *Raid Over Moscow* is just what my trusty Quickshot and I enjoy after a tiring day.

Initially, manoeuvring your supersonic jet out of the hanger is frustrating but with perseverance you'll soon be flying like Biggles through a smoothly rolling, continually varying, Soviet landscape. **Fraser Marshall**

If a game bears the US Gold label, you can usually bet your joystick that it will be pretty good.

Excellent graphics include a view of the northern hemisphere, fighter planes which turn beautifully, and a very lifelike pilot marching to his aircraft.

The graphics were equalled by the sound, a highlight being the incredibly realistic whining build up of the fighter's engine. During loading, a superb rendition of The Star Spangled Banner, and other tunes popular with our cousins across the pond, are played. **Jeremy Fisher**

able to frontal assault, so you have to throw your grenades at the back wall and get them on the rebound. This is quite good fun, and quite difficult.

Using the demo routine you can engage the action and practice on the more difficult screens.

And that's about it. *Raid Over Moscow* is an above-average shoot-'em-up marred by its gross scenario. Goodness knows what the Russians are going to retaliate with when they start producing games. **Peter Connor**

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	6
LASTING INTEREST	7
OVERALL	7

GAME: MUTANT MONTY
MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
CONTROL: KEYS, JOYSTICK
FROM: ARTIC, £6.95

You can tell from the title that this one has no pretensions to originality. Programmer John Price apparently decided to write a game with as many creatures nicked from other games as possible. So stand by to see cribs from *Manic Miner*, *Hunchback*, *Jet Pac*, etc.

Trouble is, the game's actually quite fun. Guide Monty through a series of screens, collecting gold and avoiding nasties. But these nasties have the merit of following fixed paths, so solving each screen depends less on reaction time, more on sussing the right moment to make your moves.

There are 40 different screens which represents good value for money, although this is one of those games which gets frustrating when you want to practice screen 33 and must first play through 1-32.

Still, I for one get hopelessly addicted to this kind of game and found myself going back for more. **Chris Anderson**

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
ORIGINALITY	3
LASTING INTEREST	8
OVERALL	7

away the robbers' loot.

To catch a villain you have to creep up behind him and give him a good prod below the belt. You then deposit him in the police car which pulls up at the bottom of the screen.

The last of your problems, and the most graphically entertaining, are the punks. In true 1977 fashion they bounce around on pogo sticks, red Mohican hairdos flaring, commiting a nuisance. Fuzz has to see them off and carry on with the serious business.

PC Fuzz is a game that looks very attractive, and sounds even better; but is finally a disappointment. Once you've got the hang of it, there's not a lot of variety to keep you at it. **Peter Connor**

PANEL POINTS

My emotions were mixed about this game: on the one hand I liked the clear, smooth graphics, especially the comical punks and drunkards wheeling their way through the street. On the other, I quickly tired of the scenario and I found the 'street bonus' extremely hard to gain. **Richard Patey**

Although the game idea is very original, with nice touches like the varying shops and shooting a truncheon instead of just a simple old gun, it is extremely slow.

If there was more speed in his little legs, and he actually put some effort into his aimless riding the game would be much better. Come to think of it, it would make a better game if you could control a villain and have PC Fuzz pursue you rather than the other way round. **Adrian Odgen**

There are two things that annoy me about this game. Firstly, it is very difficult to throw the truncheon where you want it, and secondly, when you lose your life you have to wait for an ambulance to come and pick you up. All I can say is thank goodness real ambulances move a bit faster! **Steve Filby**



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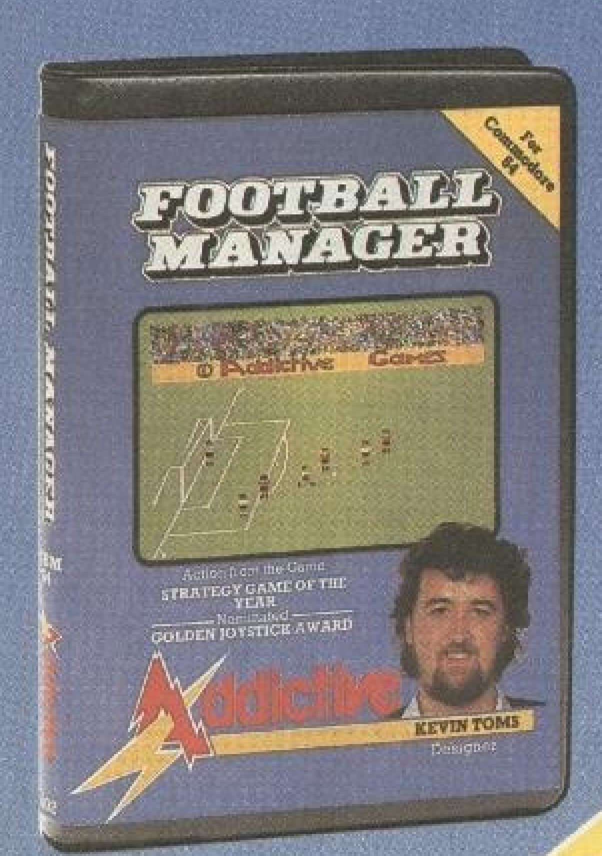
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ADDICTIVE GAMES

For the unexpanded Vic ◆ By James Sullivan

BLOCKBUSTER

Here's a great version of that classic game *Breakout* for the Vic. Although *Breakout* has been around for a long time, it still has all the features of a really compulsive game, in the great tradition of *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man*.

If you've never played *Breakout*, the idea behind the game is simplicity itself – move your bat left and right using the A and L keys (or a joystick) and bounce the ball back at the wall above you. You must knock all the bricks out of the wall to survive.

The game features variable ball speed and what's more, being a short program, it doesn't take long to type in. Happy batting!

Notes on typing in the listing...

From now on PCG will be using a special interface for all Vic 20 and Commodore 64 listings that substitutes readable text for the Commodore graphics symbols. Within the listing, commands enclosed in square brackets indicate the keys to be pressed to enter the correct graphics symbol. For example, to enter RED press Control/3 (as you would normally do to select Red on the Vic).

Further examples – DOWN means enter cursor down (i.e. the left cursor key, unshifted), RVSON means enter CTRL/9, and CLEAR means enter SHIFT/HOME.

A lower case 's' followed by an uppper case letter – e.g. sQ as in line 25 – means hold down the SHIFT key while entering the appropriate letter. Similarly, a lower case 'c' means hold down the CTRL key while entering the letter that follows.

The program is written for the unexpanded Vic.

Program details

Lines	
40-50	Display bricks
80	Wait for input
90-100	Main loop – moves ball
120-140	Ball hits border/block
170-180	New high score
215	Pokes m/code into memory
220	Clears extended video ram – enlarges video display variables

Main variables

L	Lives remaining
SC	Score
HI	High score
XY	Ball's position
YX	Ball's previous position
NB	Number of blocks hit
BS	Ball speed

```
5 REM* BLOCKBUSTER  *
6 REM*     BY       *
7 REM*JAMES SULLIVAN*
10 PRINT"[CLEAR]":GOSUB200
20 IFSC>HITHENGOSUB170
25 PRINT"[HOME][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][
DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN
][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][LEFT][LEFT][LE
FT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][GREEN]
SC:       [RED][s Q][s Q]      [CYAN]HI:"H
I:PRINT"[UP][LEFT]":SC=0:L=3
27 FORM=0TO2:FORN=0TO23:POKE7299+26*M+52
*BP+N,SP:NEXTN,M:BP=0
30 POKEYX,SP:POKES,0:POKE8010+L,81:NB=0:
BP=BP-(BP<5)
40 FORM=0TO5:BL=26*M+7221-BP*52*(M>2):FO
RN=0TO7:P=BL+3*N:POKEP,229:POKEP+C,7-M
50 POKEP+U,160:POKEP+U+C,7-M:POKEP+2,231
:POKEP+2+C,7-M:NEXTN,M
60 SYS915:X=1:Y=-26:XY=7924+INT(23*RND(8
)):YX=XY
65 FORN=7949TO7972:POKEN+C,3:POKEN,SP:NE
XT
70 POKE1008,10:POKE7959,120:POKE7960,120
:POKE7961,120:SYS828
80 IFPEEK(197)=64AND(PEEK(37137)ANDSP)TH
EN80
85 POKE8010+L,SP
90 FORT=1TOBS:NEXT
100 P=PEEK(XY):IFP=SPTHENPOKEYX,SP:POKEX
Y,81:POKEXY+C,2:YX=XY:XY=XY+X+Y:GOTO90
110 IFP>159THEN150
120 IFP=119THENPOKEYX,SP:POKEYX+C,3:L=L-
U:ON1-(L>0)GOTO20,60
130 POKES,240:IFP=102THENX=-X:XY=XY+X+X:
POKES,Z:GOTO100
140 Y=-Y:XY=XY+Y+Y:POKES,Z:GOTO100
150 A=PEEK(XY+C)AND7:POKES,140+8*A:W=XY+
(P=231)-(P=229)
160 POKEW,SP:POKEW-U,SP:POKEW+U,SP:SC=SC
+A:PRINTA$SC:NB=NB+U:ONU-(NB=48)GOTO140,
30
170 HI=SC:FORN=1TO40:POKES,210+N :PRINT"
[HOME][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOW
N][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][DOWN][D
OWN][DOWN][DOWN][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT]
[LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][RED]HI";:FORT=1
TO30:NEXT
180 POKES,0:PRINT"[LEFT][LEFT][BLUE]  ":
FORT=1TO10:NEXTT,N:RETURN
200 POKE52,28:POKE56,28:POKE650,128:POKE
36878,15:POKE36879,25:POKE37139,0
201 PRINT"   [RED][s Q][s Q][s Q][GREEN]
BLOCKBUSTER[RED][s Q][s Q][s Q]":PRINT"[
DOWN][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT]
[RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT]USE":
PRINT"[DOWN][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT]
[RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RVSON][CYAN
]A[RVSOFF] [RED]AND [RVSON][CYAN]L"
202 PRINT"[DOWN][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RI
GHT][RED]ON KEYBOARD OR":PRINT"[DOWN][RI
GHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][
RIGHT]JOYSTICK."
204 PRINT"[DOWN][RIGHT][RIGHT][RIGHT][RI
GHT][RIGHT][GREEN]BLOCK VALUES[DOWN]":FO
RN=2TO7:POKE646,N:PRINT"    [RVSON][c G]
[c M][RVSOFF]"N,:NEXT
205 INPUT"[DOWN][DOWN][BLUE]BALL SPEED 1
-100";BS:IFBS<1ORBS>100THEN205
210 PRINT"[CLEAR]":XY=0:YX=0:X=0:Y=0:P=0
:C=30720:U=1:SP=32:S=36876:Z=0:A$="[UP][
LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT][LEFT]"
215 FORN=828TO927:READX:POKEN,X:NEXT
220 FORN=7168TO7679:POKEN,SP:NEXT:POKE36
864,10:POKE36865,17:POKE36866,26:POKE368
67,196
230 FORN=7193TO7973STEP26:POKEN,102:POKE
N+U,102:POKEC+N,0:POKEC+U+N,0:NEXT
240 FORN=7168TO7193:POKEN,104:POKEC+N,0:
POKE8006+N,119:POKE31526+N,0:NEXT:RETURN
245 DATA120,169,73,141,20,3,169,3,141,21
,3,88,96
250 DATA164,197,174,240,3,240,25,169,16,
44,17,145,240,4,192,17,208,14,202,169,32
260 DATA157,16,31,169,120,157,13,31,76,1
41,3,192,21,240,12,169,127,141,34,145,16
9,128
270 DATA44,32,145,48,15,224,21,16,11,232
,169,32,157,12,31,169,120,157,15,31,169,
255,141
280 DATA34,145,142,240,3,76,191,234
290 DATA120,169,191,141,20,3,169,234,141
,21,3,88,96
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WIN OUR £800 GREAT RACE PAINTING!

Whaddya think of this issue's cover, eh? Here at PCG we reckon it's pretty hot stuff – and so it should be, it cost every penny of £800.

What's more, it was done by the legendary Chris Foss, whose artwork adorns the covers of Isaac Asimov's paperbacks and who is well known for his superb paintings of deep space and exotic, futuristic civilisations.

Now – just get this . . . Chris Foss's original painting, inspired by Legend's new mega-game, *The Great Space Race* and featured on the cover, could soon be hanging in YOUR bedroom. In this exclusive competition we're offering you the chance to win this valuable and unusual work of art, not to mention 25 copies of *The Great Space Race* for runners-up.

Whether you hang it in your room, dangle it from your bedroom door, or just prop it up against the wall, this is a prize worth taking great care of. It's already a valuable work of art and as the years go by it is almost certain to become a much-sought-after collector's item. And, of course, your friends will go positively green with envy when they see it hanging on your wall!

As for the 25 runners-up, each will receive a free copy of Legend's new block-buster for either the Spectrum 48K or the Commodore 64 worth £14.99. The 64 version has yet to be released, but if you have a 64 and are among the winners, a copy will be sent to you as soon as the game hits the streets.

So, what do you have to do? It couldn't be easier ... Looking at Chris Foss's painting set us thinking and we reckon there must be a whole load of PCG readers who are pretty hot with pencils. We'd like to see you send us a drawing of the ship you'd like to enter for the Great Space Race. Let your imagination run riot, grab a clean sheet of paper, and get that drawing in the post to us as soon as possible (and not later than 21st February).

The first prize will be awarded to the reader who submits the most exciting and most original drawing. The winning entry will be printed in the magazine together with a list of the runners-up. You don't have to be a Rembrandt – we're looking for a drawing that shows imagination and originality, not just technical expertise.

One last thing – when you send in your entry, make sure it's securely packed and isn't likely to be bent or crushed in the post.

Send your drawing to: **The Great Space Race Competition, Personal Computer Games, Evelyn House, 62 Oxford Street, London W1A 2HG.** Don't forget, the deadline for all entries is **21st February.**

THE GREAT SPACE RACE

Valhalla **was voted Game of the Year in the VNU/Sunday Times Micro Awards 1983 because of its innovative animation techniques, which allowed you to watch characters on the screen act out your instructions.**

Now, in *The Great Space Race,* Legend have abandoned the adventure/quest game and come up with a program with far more arcade elements.

The object of the game is to win the Great Race in competition with other characters and hazards controlled by the computer. The race itself centres around the galaxy's urgent need to be supplied with the exotic drink Natof, a drink that not only gets you totally legless, but also leaves you without a hangover, deliriously happy, and 100% nutritionally satisfied.

Naturally, there's a large demand for Natof and you must ferry it across the universe to 96 thirsty space-stations. Your score is assessed on the basis of the number of stations you've managed to visit and the total time taken.

Like *Valhalla,* if you're feeling lazy you can just sit back and watch the game play itself. There's a 'cinemascope' graphics window which shows you what's happening (including other characters with full facial animation) as well as a scrolling text window underneath for reports on the state of play.

All inputs are by single-key presses and at the beginning of the game you get to choose four seasoned mercenaries to help you in your task. On your delivery rounds you'll have pirates, a corrupt interplanetary police force, space-wrecks and all manner of other hazards to contend with.

Legend claim that this game represents a great step forward in the idea of the 'computer movie', and if you're lucky a free copy will soon be landing on your door-mat.

FEAST OF FREE FIREBIRD GAMES!

Here's what you have to do ... If you read our 1985 Diary in the last issue, you'll have noticed that we predicted (with absolutely no evidence, of course) that during 1985 Sainsbury's would release a game called *Wally's Trolly*. All we want you to do is think of three different well known organisations, groups, or institutions (anything from Marks and Spencers to Tottenham Hotspur) and suggest one title for a game released by each one.

The 25 readers who send in the most amusing and original suggestions will soon hear the postman knocking at their door. We'll print the names and a selection of the winning entries in a future issue of the magazine.

Here's an example of what we're looking for: Sainsbury's - *Wally's Trolly*; National Coal Board – *Manic MacGregor*; N.U.M. – *Pitstop*... Geddit?! Couldn't be easier, so get those entry forms filled in and the best of luck!

Here's your chance to blast your way into 1985 with a whole range of great games for your micro. In conjunction with Firebird we're offering 25 lucky readers the chance to walk away with ALL the Firebird games for their machine.



Entry Form

Name:......................................

Address:......................................

....

My suggestions for the three organisations and their games are:

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

My computer is (circle 1 only): Spectrum 16K, Spectrum 48K, Commodore 64, BBC B, Vic 20.

The Firebird range

Firebird have 23 games in their catalogue with titles available for the Spectrum 16/48K, CBM 64, BBC B, and Vic 20 computers. *Buggy Blast*, recently released on the Spectrum, was a PCG hit in our January issue and *Booty* (for the Spectrum and 64) is also doing well in the charts. Other Firebird games, including the brilliant *GoGo the Ghost*, are reviewed in this month's PCG Special.

Here's a complete list of the Firebird titles, arranged according to the machines they're available for, so you can see just what you'll be getting if you find your name amongst the prize-winners:

SPECTRUM 16K
Run Baby Run, Menace, Terra Force, Crazy Caverns
SPECTRUM 48K
The Wild Bunch, Viking Raiders, Mr Freeze, Exodus, Booty, Byte Bitten, Buggy Blast, + all 16K games as above.
COMMODORE 64
GoGo the Ghost, Mr Freeze, Exodus, Booty, Headache, Zulu, Demons of Topaz
BBC B
Estra, The Hacker, Bird Strike, Gold Digger, Duck!, Acid Drops
VIC 20
Snake Bite (Unexpanded), Mickey the Bricky (Unexpanded)

Are you brave enough to enter the savage world of mighty Conan?

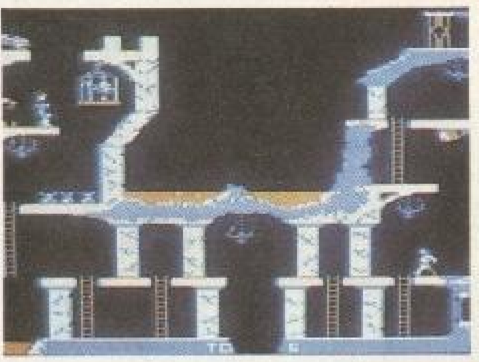
You've experienced his barbaric world in movies, novels and comics. Now Conan is ready to spring to life in your home.

So flex your muscles and prepare to do battle.

Your mission is to slay Conan's wicked rival and bring home a bounty of gems. Blocking your way are fire-breathing dragons, poisonous scorpions, vicious bats and other deadly adversaries.

If that wasn't enough, you also have to fight your way through dark caves and dangerous dungeons, while looking out for mysterious creatures waiting their moment to attack!





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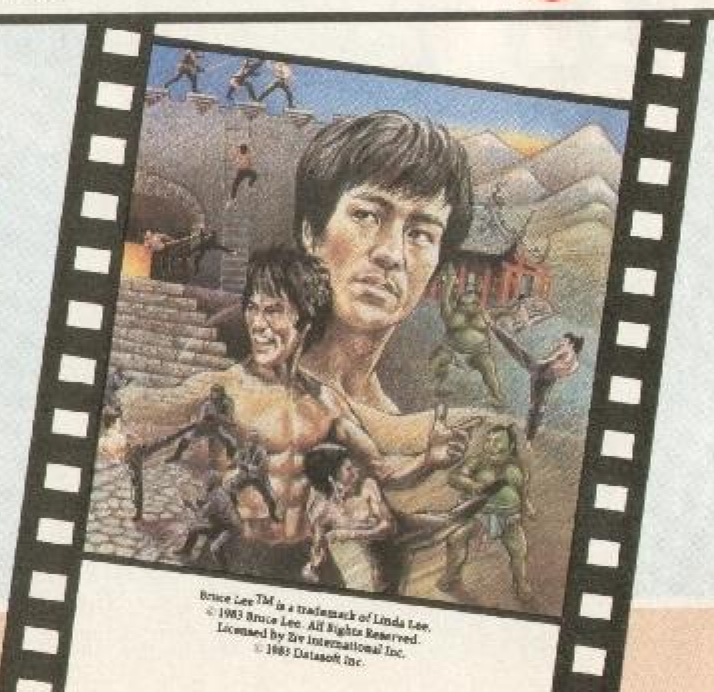
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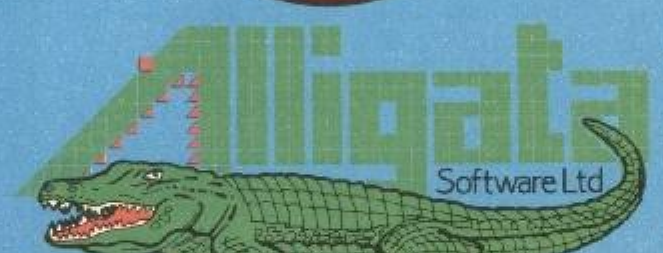
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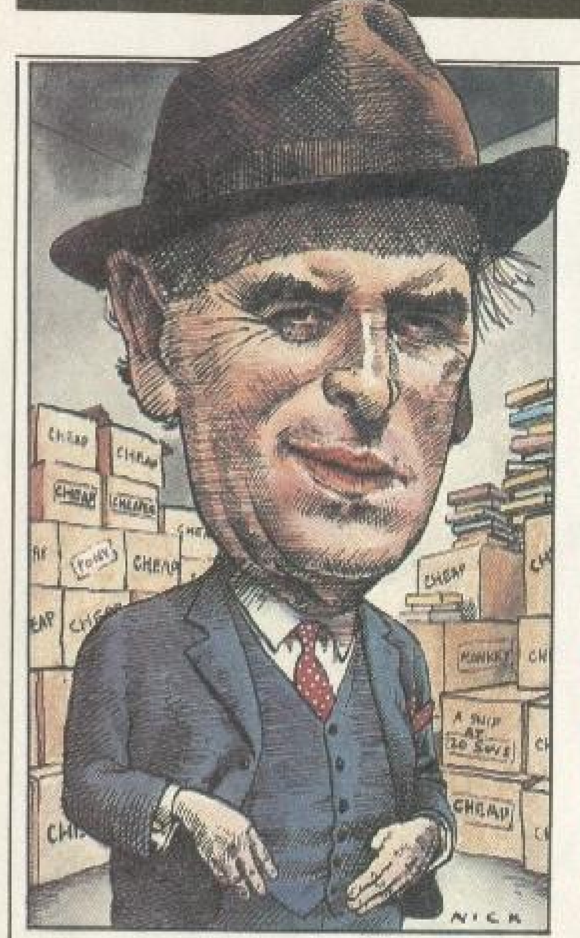
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CHEAPO

Chris Anderson samples the huge pile of low-cost tap

Imagine a game containing 150 very difficult screens to be conquered and mapped out. Suppose each screen offers attractive, smooth graphics and exciting sound effects. Now suppose the game is on the market for £2.50. A bargain? Dead right. What's more the game exists. It's called *Go Go the Ghost,* it's released by Firebird for the Commodore 64, and it's just one of the programs we've unearthed which disprove the claim that all budget games are junk.

Mind you, you have to be incredibly careful shopping in the sub £3 price range. Many of the titles on offer are state of the art 1982. They offer about as much lasting interest as the Daily Mirror quick crossword. Frankly four or five of them wouldn't be a patch on a decent standard price game. But there are also a large number of straightforward, simple, competent games which, until recently, software houses were selling for at least a fiver. And just occasionally you find a gem of a game which even a stinking rich games freak can't afford to turn up his nose at.





● Go Go fjups through a tricky screen

1985

CBM 64 (Mastertronic, £1.99)

Stunning graphics for a cheapo game. You blast off in a space-craft to one of four planets where you have to pick up a number of nuclear pods. This involves manoeuvring the craft very delicately until it's close enough to activate a tractor beam.

Accidental contact with the planet terrain is fatal and so is being hit by a regularly passing flying saucer or by the slow-firing planet defence guns. The game has a great feel to it because of the way the craft is controlled – rotate left, rotate right and thrust, as in *Asteroids* or *Lunar Lander*. There are also some cool sound effects.

Each of the planets and the home base consist of a scrolling, wrap-around scenario. The planets include caverns, some of which are very tricky

Should you clear all four, you get to try the final stage which is an even more difficult cavern from which a fusion core must be picked up. It had my pulse racing, that bit. If you make it, level two is the same except with negative gravity, making it harder still.

Verdict: Knockout.
Value for money: 9

GO GO THE GHOST

CBM 64 (Firebird, £2.50)

This one will spook the opposition for sure – it's a howling success, one which most software houses would be proud to sell at around the £7 mark. It was written by a Swede which means that whenever Go Go gives up the ghost he emits a speech bubble saying 'Fjup!' Swedish for 'Zap!'

In fact, there's an awful lot of fjupping because the game is ghoulishly mean. In each of the 150 screens you have to go go round various obstacles to one of the exits, possibly flicking switches or picking up keys on the way. A large number of dastardly creatures obstruct you, forcing you to resort to an invisibility spell. This drains your power at a disspiriting rate, although there are objects to collect which restore power as well as grant extra time, lives or points.

This is a full-featured arcade-adventure which could have you entranced for weeks. Just remember – you first read about it in PCG.

Verdict: Go go get it.
Value for money: 9



•PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG•HIT☆PCG

GAMES THE PCG VERDICT

...n the shops and discovers a few cracking bargains

CHILLER
CBM 64 (Mastertronics, £1.99)

We've already reviewed this one – a surprisingly good platform game based on the Michael Jackson video. There are five very different screens, and some good background music.
Verdict: It's a thriller.
Value for money: 8

BOOTY
CBM 64 Spectrum 48K (Firebird, £2.50)

Reviewed in our November issue, this is another cracking bargain with 20 linked screens of platforms and some novel game ideas.
Verdict: Bootiful.
Value for money: 8

should take some little while to solve.

Pretty graphics, worthy of a princess, including a very cute knight. Some of the platform screens seem a bit unplayable, and you're bound to lose energy by contacting nasties. But still an amazing title for the money.
Verdict: Mastertronic magic.
Value for money: 9

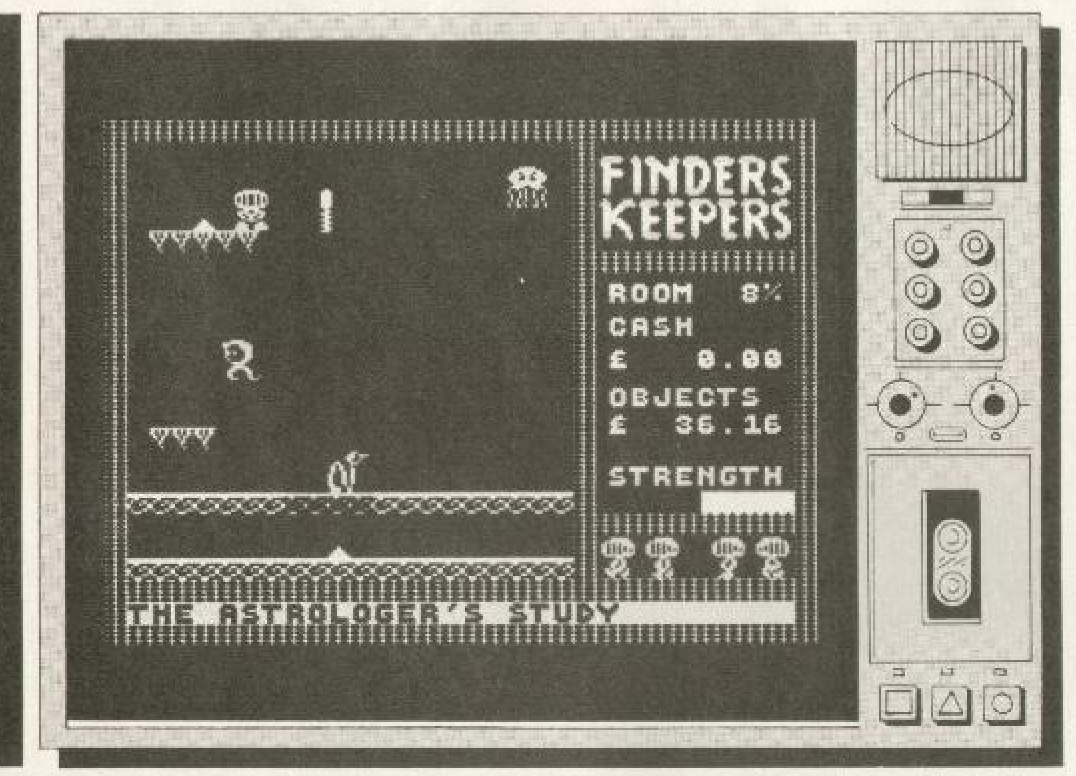
SHUTTLE SHOCK
Spectrum 48K (Software Projects, £1.99)

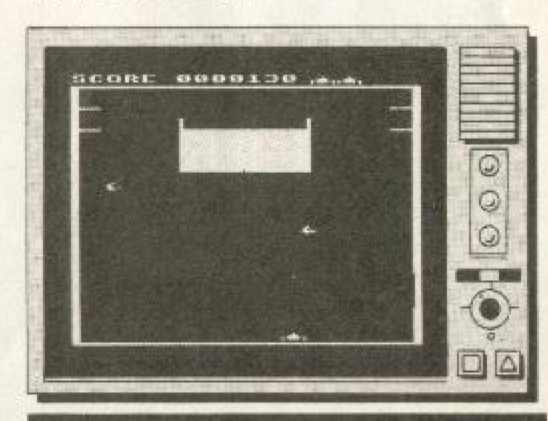
What a shock! A platform game with a difference. The difference is angular teleporting. To move up you don't jump, you teleport in an upward diagonal line. With a bit of skill you end up on a platform and not in mid-air.

pletion, heart-breaking when it gets blown to smithereens. The action doesn't alter too much on later screens but it does get VERY tough.
Verdict: Great fun.
Value for money: 7

ACID DROPS
BBC B (Firebird, £2.50)

Hit the fire button and blast the nasties, but watch out for the acid which starts to drip out of the tank at the top of the screen. It kills you on contact – and it turns the nasties into nastier nasties. Survive long enough and a gate opens, allowing you an exciting fast ride through a maze into the next level.
Verdict: Spiffing stuff.
Value for money: 7





● Acid drops burning through

FINDERS KEEPERS
Spectrum 48K (Mastertronic, £1.99)

The dramatic improvement in Mastertronic titles continues with this sparkling arcade adventure.

Make your way through 25 screens of platform action, plus two large four-way scrolling mazes, in search of precious objects. Some are just lying around, others must be obtained by trading. And certain combinations of objects (which you have to work out) merge to produce more valuable ones (eg. philosopher's stone + bar of lead = bar of gold).

Can you earn enough money to buy the King's daughter the special birthday present she wants? Or will you simply try to make yourself a fortune and then escape from the castle? Either way the game requires a certain amount of thought as well as arcade skills, and

Then there are the lifts which either drop you down safely, or shoot you sideways. They make moving about the screens great fun.

Apart from that the screens and nasties are in the *Manic Miner* genre and are really very good. Solving them is challenging and fun. The only drawback is there are just 10 screens and it may not take more than a week or two to get through them all.
Verdict: Lemme 'ave another go.
Value for money: 7

ESTRA
BBC B (Firebird, £2.50)

You collect some 30 fragments to form a statue at the centre of the screen. But there are five different alien species to avoid, each behaving quite differently.

Great to see your statue nearing com-

THE HACKER
BBC B (Firebird, £2.50)

A very competent platform game. The all leaping action isn't much lower in standard than in hit titles such as *Blagger* and *Mineshaft*. And although there are only 12 screens, instead of 20 or 30, you might just find that's all you're likely to get through.
Verdict: Manic fun.
Value for money: 7

EXODUS
CBM 64 (Firebird, £2.50)

Enjoyable shoot-'em-up based (loosely) on the arcade game *Tempest*. Shoot monsters coming out of a pit, but avoid hitting the potatoes. Nice opening music.
Verdict: Good blasting.
Value for money: 6

FRED'S FAN FACTORY
Spectrum 48K (Software Projects, £1.99)

Novel game idea in which you have to turn fans on and off to blow balloons safely through a hazard-filled platform network.
Verdict: Fun for a while.
Value for money: 5

HITMAN

Spectrum 48K (Scorpio Games World, £1.99)

Track down and shoot a series of killer agents. One or two reasonable still graphics, otherwise tedious rubbish, despite separate 48K instruction program!
Verdict: Another Scorpio sting.
Value for money: 3

BEEBUL

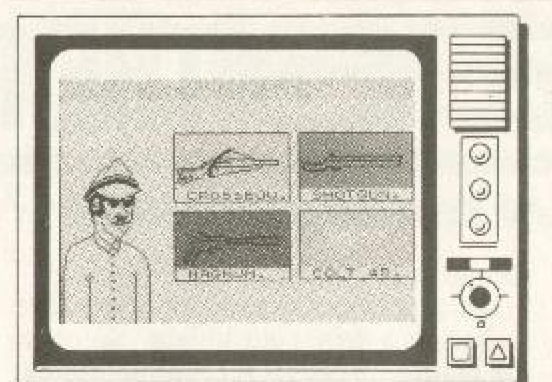
Spectrum (Scorpio Games World, £1.99)

Work your way down through a series of platforms, avoiding oscillating monsters.
Verdict: Not enough to it
Value for money: 4

NUKE LEAR

Spectrum 48K (Charlie Charlie Sugar, £1.99)

Simple panic game in which you try to divert a series of rolling barrels down the right channels.
Verdict: Stay *Nuke Lear* free.
Value for money: 3



Hitman – choose your weapon

COPTER

Spectrum 48K (Omega, £1.99)

Fly a tiny helicopter round a blank screen, blasting other tiny helicopters.
Verdict: Don't bother.
Value for money: 2

CALIFORNIA GOLDRUSH

CBM 64 (Software Projects, £1.99)

Move completely round boxes to create gold. Avoid Indians, or block their paths with dynamite. Average graphics and sound.
Verdict: Mediocre.
Value for money: 5

GOLD DIGGER

BBC B (Firebird, £2.50)

Rather poor variant of *Dig Dug*.
Verdict: Bury it.
Value for money: 4

CHALLENGER

CBM 64 (Mastertronics, £1.99)

Action based on the first section of *Skramble.*
Verdict: Unchallenging.
Value for money: 3

WIZARD'S WARRIOR

Spectrum 48K (Mastertronics, £1.99)

Multi-screen maze game with poor, jerky graphics.
Verdict: Yawn.
Value for money: 2

BYTE-BITTEN

Spectrum 48K (Firebird, £2.50)

Two-part game – make your way round a maze to find an object and you get to play Sea Wolf, a horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up set over a fleet of ships.
Verdict: Forget the maze part.
Value for money: 4

CRAZY CAVERNS

Spectrum 16/48K (Firebird, £2.50)

Push cubes into a huge, colourful mouth while avoiding 'crazy crashers'. Interesting tactics and 10 different screens.
Verdict: Good for 16K.
Value for money: 6

MOONLIGHTER

Spectrum 48K (Software Projects, £1.99)

Variant on *Pengo*. Push boxes around a warehouse and avoid tennis balls. Nice music.
Verdict: Couldn't play it.
Value for money: 4

The names behind the games

The number of companies flogging cheapo games have ballooned in the last few months. First of all were Mastertronics whose launch of £1.99 games back in April sent shockwaves through the industry. However, their initial range of titles was pretty dire, and since then they've cut back on their number of releases in a partly successful effort to increase quality.

Pulsonic were another early contender and the less said about them the better. When PCG reviewed five of their first releases only one got an overall rating above three – and that was taking into account the £2.99 price. If they've released anthing better since we haven't seen it.

Then there are the Greek letter ranges, Gamma and Omega. One Omega title, *Battle Ground* for the Vic 20, received a reasonable review in our December issue, but apart from that we haven't seen anything good from either range. And some of the titles were appalling.

Two bigger names have entered the fray more recently. There's Firebird, backed by the massive resources of British (anyone want my shares?) Telecom who are putting out a 'silver range' of games at £2.50.

Then there's Software Projects whose 'Super Saver' titles now sell at just £1.99. Both of these companies have managed to avoid releasing truly awful games, but nevertheless the bulk of both their ranges is unexceptional.

Cheetahsoft are the latest to try their luck, having just cut the price of all their titles to £1.99. Well, they were certainly overpriced before.

BIRD STRIKE

BBC B (Firebird, £2.50)

Shoot pigeons to add notes to a tune. Trouble is these aircraft keep getting in the way.
Verdict: Enjoyable but simple.
Value for money: 5

FLIP FLAP

Spectrum 48K (Software Projects, £1.99)

Fine simulation of pin ball with plenty of different machines to try out. But is pinball any fun on a micro?
Verdict: No.
Value for money: 3

RUN BABY RUN

Spectrum 16/48K (Firebird, £2.50)

Very difficult game in which you attempt to trick pursuing cars into crashing into each other. Poor graphics, but several different road layouts.
Verdict: Frustrating.
Value for money: 3

ZULU

CBM 64 (Firebird, £2.50)

Simple *Pac Man* based game with 25 connected mazes. You collect masks and avoid warriors. Hitting cauldrons makes the maze invisible.
Verdict: Preferred the movie.
Value for money: 5

ASTRAL ATTACK

CBM 64 (Omega, £1.99)

Move a cursor over descending shells to protect your cities.
Verdict: Pretty, but boring.
Value for money: 3

REVENGE OF THE QUADRA

Vic 20 + 8K (Software Projects, £1.99)

Fast, violent, noisy shoot-'em-up in the best Vic traditions. Your space ship shuttles left/right at the bottom of the screen and you hammer the aliens.
Verdict: A good, old-fashioned BLAST.
Value for money: 6

TOMB OF AKENATEN

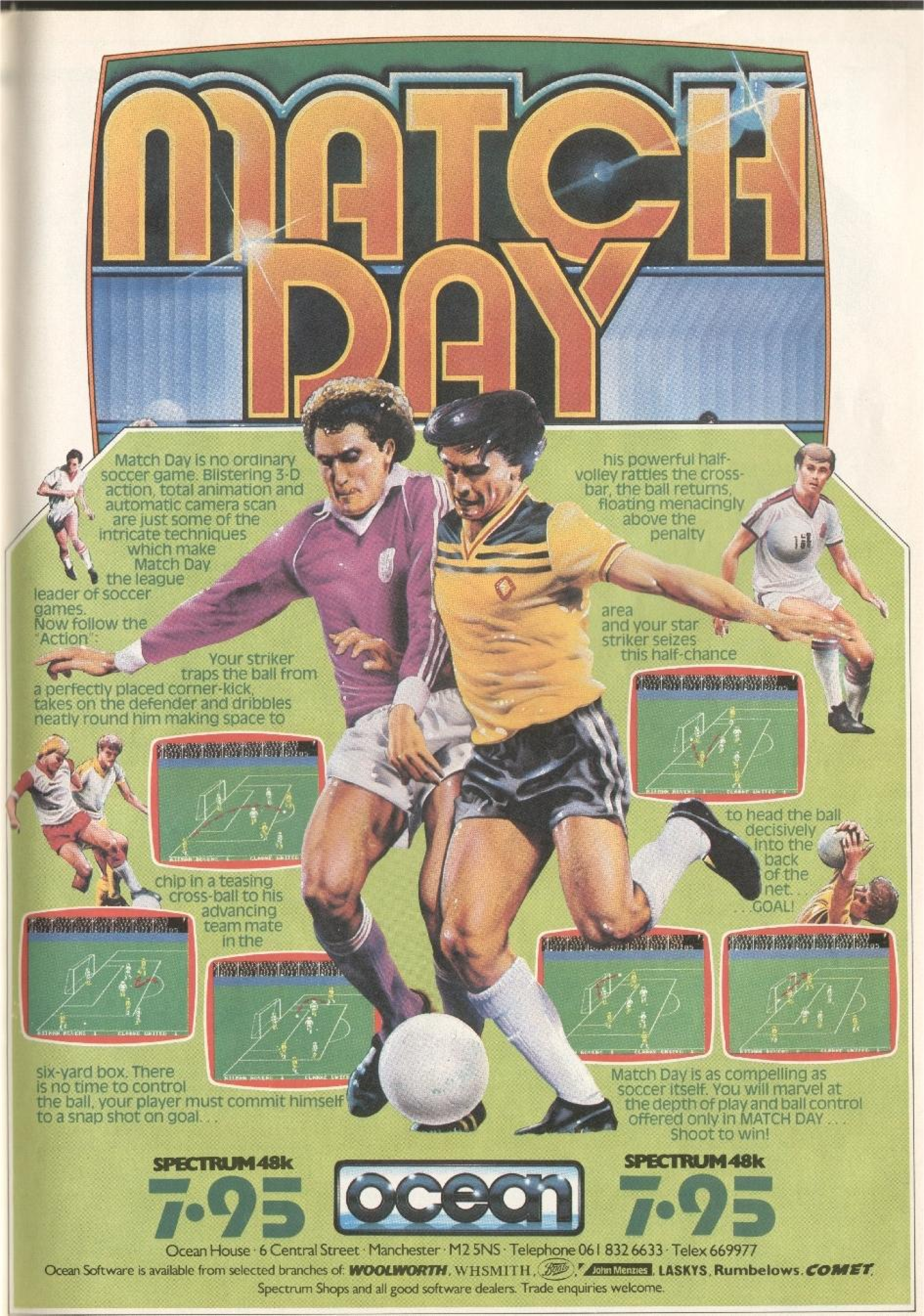
Spectrum 48K (Charlie Charlie Sugar, £1.99)

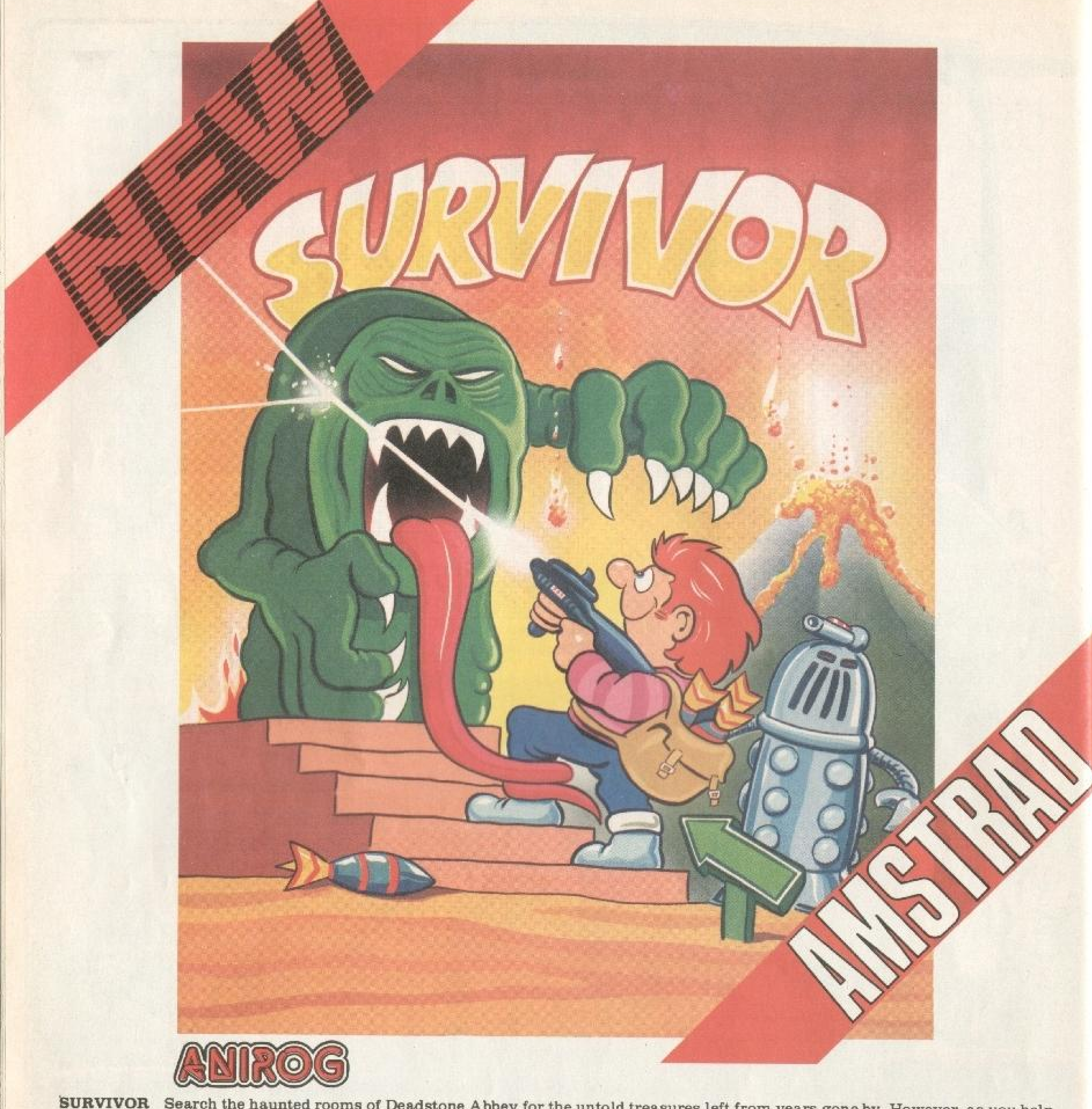
Written mostly in Basic. Jerk your way through an uninteresting labyrinth.
Verdict: Graveyard material.
Value for money: 1

VAMPIRE KILLER

Spectrum 48K (Scorpio Games, £1.99)

Tedious treasure collection game, written mostly in Basic and featuring jerky slow movement.
Verdict: Bloodsucker.
Value for money: 2


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area and your star striker seizes this half-chance
to head the ball decisively into the back of the net. ...GOAL!
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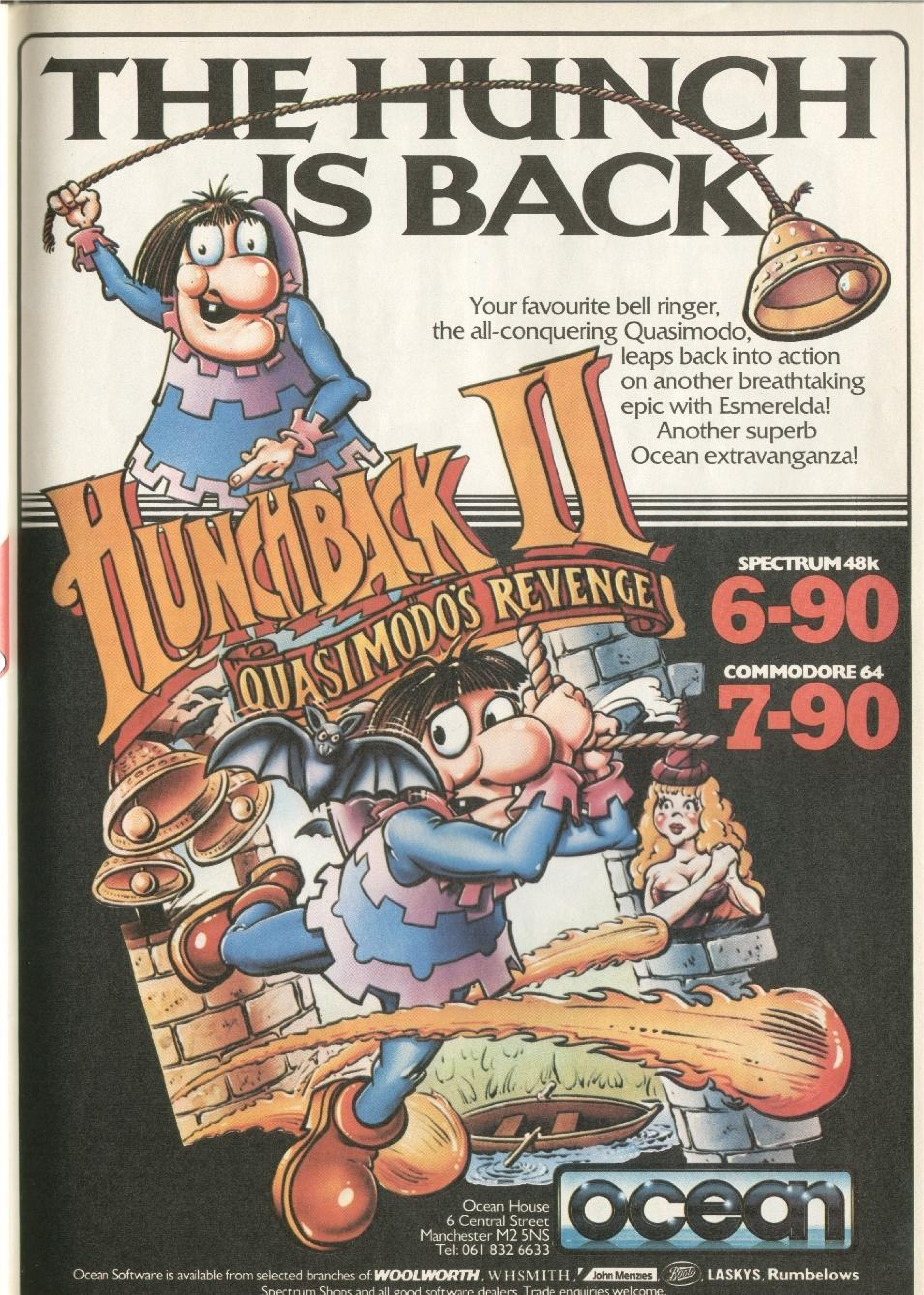
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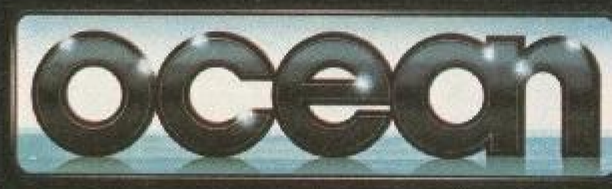
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ADVENTUREWORLD

The White Wizard's words of wisdom for adventure lovers

NOW. . .CUT PRICE ADVENTURES

Attention please, penniless adventurers and apprentice Enchanters on low pay, this month sees the beginning of a revolution in adventure software prices.

Mastertronics, who have already put the cat among the pigeons with their budget-priced games in the arcade market, are launching a new label 'Master Adventurer'. Their first release, ***Se-Kaa of Assiah***, offers 170 illustrated locations and 'full sentence analysis' in two 48K programs for the mind-blowing price of £2.99! On hearing this news, the White Wizard immediately despatched obedient dwarves to secure a copy of the program.

Hmmm . . . Well, the first thing to point out is that just because a program offers 'full sentence analysis' doesn't mean it's going to be any better at understanding what you type in. After all, 'Examine book' is a 'full sentence', so most games fall into this category.

In fact, *Se-Kaa of Assiah* only checks the first three letters of each word you type in and doesn't have a very large vocabulary. Furthermore, it isn't at all helpful when you get it wrong, saying merely 'Try something else' or 'That will get you nowhere'. Combine these two facts and you'll find that what puzzles there are become fiendishly difficult.

The aim of the game, which comes in two parts, is first to collect three legendary treasures and then, in the second part, to restore them to their proper resting places. The program is mostly written in Basic and is slightly slow in responding to the keyboard.

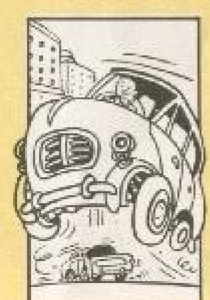
Every location has graphics and without these the game would be pretty dire since most locations don't have anything EXCEPT graphics – although there's a lot to look at, there isn't much to find. Unfortunately, although initially attractive, the graphics are rather repetitive and don't contribute much to the game. Even more serious is the fact that you can't save your position without quitting the game.

Mastervision, alias Mastertronics, are to be congratulated for bringing out these cheap label games. For people on a budget, *Se-Kaa* will be a useful purchase, but don't expect too much and be prepared to spend more on something else if you want a really good game.



● Spidermanic action

In Search of Angels

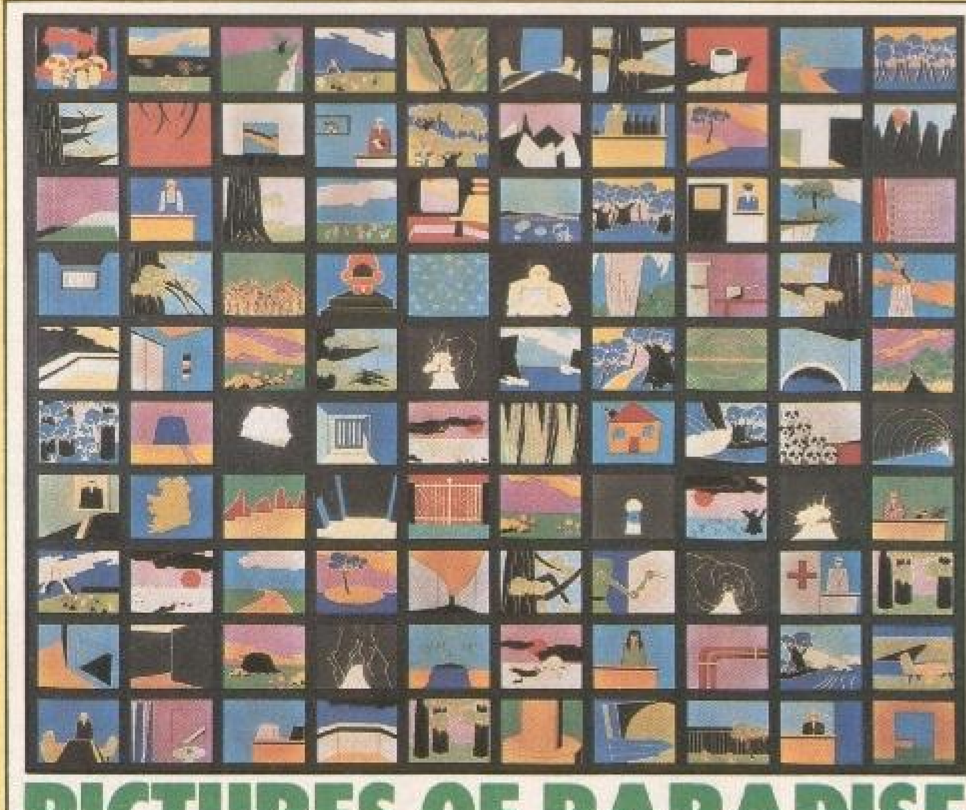


Mastertronics haven't got the budget end of the market all to themselves, however. A company called 8th Day Software are currently bringing out a range of adventures at the very attractive price of £1.75 each.

The company currently have around six games in their catalogue, labelled from 'beginner's game' up to 'advanced difficulty'. I haven't had time to try them all, but I did enjoy ***In Search of Angels***. Like the rest of the 8th Day range, this is a Quilled adventure, text-only, and with some original touches.

I'm sorry to see that 8th Day haven't given Gilsoft much credit for their use of the Quill. In fact, there doesn't seem to be any mention of it at all on the cassettes or in the programs. Naughty, naughty – you may be selling your games for £1.75, but the only reason you can afford to do so, I suspect, is because Gilsoft have done most of the hard work, so why not give them a bit more credit?

Back to *In Search of Angels*, which sends you on an international chase after enemy agents. Original sequences include a 'car chase', where entering the wrong tactics will send you and your specially-equipped auto to the graveyard. You will also have to keep on the right side of your secret service boss, not to mention the mem-



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Here for your delectation are 100 of the 240 screens from Level 9's *Return to Eden*. If you're still being roasted by Snowball's engines, then cast your eyes on the above and see what you're missing out on! Come on, boys and girls, don't hang around inside that molehill – come on out, the countryside's luvverly.



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bers of the 'other side'.

Despite a certain similarity of appearance due to the use of the Quill and the limitations of the Gilsoft interpreter, these games are really excellent value. In fact, the White Wizard reckons that they're substantially better value than the Mastervision offering reviewed above, but they are, of course, text-only.

Still, in these hard times it has to be hats off to both Mastertronics and 8th Day for lowering software prices.

Spiderman



Meanwhile, back in the £8-£10 range, Adventure International have just released ***Spiderman***, Scott Adams' latest Marvel Comics spin-off. *The Hulk* has already been a great success - how does Spiderman shape up?

Well, there's no doubt about it, the wispy-bearded man from Florida has done it again. To my mind, *Spiderman* is even better than *The Hulk*. The graphics are excellent, of course, but this time the game is set in more Earthlike surroundings, though the characters you come across look as if they've come straight out of a comic, which of course they have. The game's available on five machines, but only Spectrum and '64 owners get the graphics. Ah well....

As you explore the sky-scraper in which you appear to be temporarily imprisoned, you'll encounter such oddities as Sandman (that's right, you're standing on him – Ouch!) and Hydroman, who's really rather wet. You'll have fun messing about with deadly chemicals, consulting Madam Web, or fighting it out with the Lizard.

The game is different from Scott's earlier adventures in that it is no longer limited to simple verb/noun input, but will accept complex sentences. This means you can 'Talk to Madam Web', for example, and string commands together using commas or the word 'then'.

Once again you must collect bio-gems and outwit your adversaries, and yes, there's another Natter Energy Egg to be dealt with (don't try eating THIS one!). The game is initially somewhat easier than *The Hulk*, but rapidly becomes very challenging. The White Wizard is currently deeply involved and urges other adventurers to join him.

Forest at the World's End



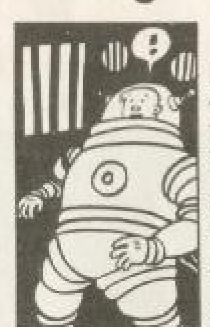
With all these cheap programs coming out, the White Wizard is beginning to have grave doubts about some of the games that software companies ask us to pay for. The trouble is that these programs don't always come from tiny software houses who may not know any better – some of them come from companies who definitely SHOULD know better... Like Interceptor Software, for example. Last month, I gave a reasonaby favourable notice of *Jewels of Babylon*, on the grounds that I'd found one or two of the puzzles pretty difficult to crack. At least the game had me stumped – but shortly after playing *Jewels* I loaded up their earlier game ***Forest at the World's End*** (just released for the Amstrad) and ... oh dear.

Despite having a reasonable number of locations, *Forest at the World's End* kept me busy for no longer than three hours – at the outside (I wasn't watching the hourglass, so I can't be too exact about the time – three hours is generous). Despite occasionally being killed at random by flying lizards, there was nothing challenging about the game, and some very beautiful graphics did nothing to conceal the fact that most of the locations were described in one brief sentence and contained little of interest.

The game has you setting off on a not-very-long trek eastwards to rescue a Princess from a Wicked Wizard. After solving a few simple puzzles, you confront the wizard, type 'Kill Wizard' and find – to your dismay – that you have cracked the game. Not, I think, £6.00 worth of entertainment (or even £5.50 worth if you've got a Spectrum).

Naughty, naughty Interceptor. Was it really you who gave us *Heroes of Karn*? Let's hope your next offering has a bit more substance.

Salvage



Sumlock aren't a cor pany that one normally associates with adventures, so the White Wizard loaded up their game ***Salvage*** for the Commodore 64 with great interest.

The plot is certainly an intriguing one – whilst carrying on salvage operations in outer space you teleport yourself on-board an abandoned convict shuttle, which, being a convict shuttle, won't let you leave again without cracking the code in its computer.

The game mixes text and graphics on a split screen, with a picture for every location. The graphics are quite good and draw almost instantly. One very interesting innovation is the inclusion of a 'note-pad' panel, which you can use to jot down notes during the game. Entering 'Note' followed by a number, word, or whatever you want to remember, transfers your input to the noticeboard where it remains until the end.

An excellent idea, Sumlock, and I hope other programmers pick up on it.

The rest of the game, however, doesn't quite live up to the ingenuity of the display. To start with there are only 25 locations, one of which doesn't really count because you die automatically every time you enter it. With only 15 objects or thereabouts, the game is rather limited in scope.

The White Wizard completed this entire game, minus the last two locations, in under an hour, which doesn't say much for lasting interest. The last two locations did have me flummoxed, however, though whether they alone can keep you busy for long enough to justify the £6.50 price tag I very much doubt.

So, another month's pocket money down the drain, and not really much to show for it. Still, it's nice to see Sumlock entering the adventure arena – let's hope next time they bring us something worth buying.

Catacombs



Now, dear readers, let us take time off for this month's horror script, featuring the White Wizard's encounter with ***Catacombs*** from Anirog for the Commodore 64...

Act 1. Scene 1.

Enter the White Wizard, with new Anirog game

WW By the whiskers of Nebuchadnezzar, a game from Anirog – this should be interesting!

Enter a soothsayer...

SS Beware of that game, O White Wizard!

WW **** off, you odious know-all and bring me a bottle of Pipistrelle '56.

Exit soothsayer, mumbling curses

WW Let's see.... Decide which role – either Duke the warrior or Oswich the witch. Hmmm ... Duke seems more suited to my ruggedly handsome physique...

Loud laughter from offstage

WW *Watching screen, game now loaded.* Hmmm ... nice graphics ... like the way that cat moves across the screen ... Let's go south. What?? 'That's no good'?? Oh, it expects me to type 'Go s'. Ah well ... 'The door is sealed'?? Hmmm ... *(The Wizard tries a few entries)* ... Let's try 'Examine door' ... 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good'....

After several minutes of frustration the White Wizard goes to the phone...

WW Hello ... Anirog?? ... How the *** do I get out of the first location, and why does the game crash when I enter 'Say to' and miss out the character's name, and how can I tell whether I'm on the right track if whenever I'm trying to solve a problem all the computer will say is 'That's no good' unless I get it EXACTLY right?

After a brief conversation the White Wizard returns to the keyboard and enters 'Break seal'.

WW Aha! The next location. A buolder blocks my path! Let's try 'Move boulder' ... 'That's no good'. Okay, what

about 'Push boulder ... 'That's no good'. Humph! ... 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good' ... Aaaggh!!!

The White Wizard goes back to the phone...

WW Hello, Anirog?? Alright, how do I get out of the second location ... What??! 'Trace symbol'!!! How was I supposed to guess that if all the program will say is 'That's no good'??? ... Ah, I see, you're going to put some hints on the packaging – I should think so, too.

The White Wizard returns yet again to the keyboard and enters 'Trace symbol'.

WW Well at least that time I didn't get 'That's no good'. Although how I was supposed to know that the thing on the wall was a symbol I don't know. Looks like a trumpet to me ... Now, let's see ... A demon blocks my path ... Let's try getting that sword ... Ooops! It's slipped from my hand and fallen down a crevice! I don't like the look of this ... *He tries several commands.* 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good' ... 'That's no good' ... That's no good' ... Aaaaaaghhhh! I can't bear it any longer!!

The Anirog tape is suddenly levitated from the Commodore cassette deck and vaporised. The soothsayer enters with a large bottle...

SS I told you s ... Eeeek ... o ... graark!

The soothsayer undergoes a hideous transformation and hops out of the room croaking loudly ... The White Wizard grabs the bottle and storms off.

Curtain.

Yes, dear readers, there are two morals here. Moral number one – when a wizard throws a wobbly, stand well clear. Moral number two – avoid Anirog's game unless you like an adventuure that expects the most obscure inputs and rewards all others with, 'That's no good'.

Just to put the icing on the cake, the game also has a habit of jumping into Basic every so often, expects you to use capital letters when necessary and rejects input if they're absent, invites you to speak to other characters but then makes YOU do what you told them to do ... and so on, and so on.

To be fair to Anirog, I won't include the game in the ratings because (having not got very far with it) I don't feel qualified to do so. To be fair to *you*, dear reader, I will say that I found the way the program interacted with the player absolutely infuriating and in this case it would take more than a bottle of Pipistrelle to get me back to the keyboard.

Serpent's Lair

Haven't seen much for the Beeb recently, so I was quick to load up ***Serpent's Lair*** from Comsoft. How I wish I hadn't. I don't want to waste your time with this, but really, unless you're below the age of ten you shouldn't bother with this game. Even then you should think twice.

Serpent's Lair has you travelling round the world solving 'puzzles'. The vocabulary of the game is tiny – far smaller than can possibly be excused on the basis of lack of memory space.

But wait a minute, perhaps I've got the wrong end of the stick – perhaps this IS a game for young children. Surely I should give Comsoft the benefit of the doubt? Hmm... well, if it is for children, they're going to end up thoroughly confused – the program doesn't check your inputs sufficiently, and the resulting responses are highly misleading.

For example, if a bear asks you for a coin (as it will do), and you happen to have a money box, entering 'Give money box' will get you the response 'You haven't got it', even though it figures larger than life in your inventory. In fact, entering 'Give qwtry' will get you exactly the same reply.

The graphics are chunky, unimaginative, and repetitive. There's no sound. There's no...At this point the White Wizard gives up in exasperation and passes on to the next game. Come on, Comsoft, you can do better than this.

King Solomon's Mines

Severn Software have two new games out for the Commodore 64, ***King Solomon's Mines*** and ***Nuclear War Games.*** The latter is of some interest if only because two distributors refused to touch it because of the title. They're both graphics adventures with between 60 and 70 locations, but despite the topicality of *War Games* it was to *King Solomon's Mines* that I paid my first visit.

This is a split-screen text/graphics game with simple verb-noun input and equally simple, though colourful, blocky graphics. If you've read the excellent book by H Rider Haggard, on which the game is very loosely based, then you'll known the rudiments of the plot – penetrate into darkest Africa where the natives are anything but friendly and bring back the goodies.

There really isn't a lot to say about this game. There's nothing startlingly original in it, apart from a short real-time sequence in which you have to escape from some quicksand, and I think it's possibly a bit pricey at £9.95.

The vocabulary is rather limited ('Examine', for example, isn't understood) and as with *Peter Pan* from Hodder and Stoughton I reckon you're better off with the book. The trouble with programs like these is that they can never match the detailed descriptions of the original.

Nuclear War Games isn't a lot better, though it's a pound cheaper. The plot is rather uninspiring – the NORAD computer has gone berserk and is intent on starting a nuclear fry-up. Your commendable, but totally predictable, task, is to stop it.

The format is identical to *King Solomon's Mines,* though there are fewer locations. Both programs allow you to carry up to five items at once, accept simple commands, and don't display exits unless you particularly request them.

The graphics are quite acceptable, but really that's about the only thing I can say in its favour.

Meanwhile Severn Software tell me that they're gearing up production in order to be able to spend more time on programming and developing more complex games, so perhaps their future releases will be more enjoyable.

We shall see.

The Wizar

FIRST INTO THE White Wizard's mailbag was a brief note from **Iain Moring.** 'I read your review on Melbourne House's *Sherlock* and rushed out to buy it. That was yesterday. I really don't know what all the fuss was about. Admittedly I found it difficult at first, but after two or three hours, having got into the train of thought of the author, I found it easily mastered. I would be glad to give any help to anyone, anytime.'

Many thanks for your letter, Iain, and I'll include your address in next month's Helpline, so if there is anyone out there having trouble in Victorian England, don't despair because help is at hand.

Meanwhile, a number of adventurers seem to be getting to grips with another mystery – the identity of the White Wizard himself. Anyone with even the slightest knowledge of magical practice must realise that the last thing a wizard will reveal is his name, lest it be used in dire mystic rituals designed to rob him of his powers.

Karth 'Pete Austin' Demonslayer has other ideas, however, and claims to know my real name. Sorry, Karth, if you won't reveal your own name, you can hardly expect me to reveal mine! I will, however, say 'Ug' to all your mates in the Scum Mouth Tribe of Black Orcs in the Caves of Svenal, as requested.

Meanwhile, **James Elliot** says he has strong suspicions about the White Wizard's identity – 'It's driving me CRAZY', he cries. Ah well, James, in this mad world it's the crazy people who have the most fun. Many thanks for your letter, however, and I've included your offers of help elsewhere in the issue.

David Dew, requesting help with *Pilgrim's Progress* on the Spectrum, says 'This is a good game, requiring a fair knowledge of the book and also a lot of reference to the Bible. However, it is one of those where you have to answer virtually word-perfect and where words acceptable in other answers are not understood.' Actually, David, this is one of the few games I haven't tangled with,

Curse of the 7 Faces



Artic have been busy again on behalf of Spectrum and Amstrad owners. After bringing out *Eye of Bain* – their first graphics adventure – they've reverted to text-only with ***Curse of the 7 Faces***. Don't let the text-only aspect put you off, since the location descriptions are detailed and reasonably original.

Your objective is to achieve Wizard status by finding a spell book, a staff, a hat, and a cloak. I should point out here that in real life you would also have to apply for membership of the National Union of Wizards, normally only granted following payment of a massive fee. For Artic's sake, however, I am content to let the matter rest for the moment.

Once you've achieved such elevated status, you must prove your mettle by defeating another (evil) wizard to win the game. There are approximately 150 locations and an average vocabulary, linked together by a number of puzzles, most of which are fairly logical and perhaps not quite so difficult as some of Artic's earlier offerings. Even the obligatory maze gives away most of its secrets by having each room named after a different colour, and you can list the game's vocabulary by typing 'Dictionary'.

Like all Artic's games, this is an enjoyable adventure. It doesn't have independent characters wandering about, or enormously complex sentence input, but it does have a hypnotic mirror, a Herculean rabbit, and enough to keep you busy far into the night.

Well, that's it for this month. Don't forget, if you have any comments or suggestions for the Adventureworld pages, do let me know. These are your pages, and the White Wizard remains your humble servant. The address to write to is: **The White Wizard, Personal Computer Games, 62 Oxford Street, London W1A 2HG.** Correspondence on all aspects of adventuring and life in the Goblin's Dungeon is most welcome.

STOP PRESS: *Curse of the 7 Faces* will now be released by Imperial Software (NOT Artic).

GAME	MACHINE	PRICE	ATMOSPHERE	COMPLEXITY	INTERACTION	OVERALL
SE-KAA OF ASSIAH	S, C	£2.99	4	6	4	5
IN SEARCH OF ANGELS	S	£1.75	7	5	5	7
SPIDERMAN	S, C B, Am, E	£9.95 £7.95	7	8	7	7
FOREST AT THE WORLD'S END	S Am	£5.50 £6.00	6	4	6	5
SALVAGE	C	£2.99	4	5	5	5
CURSE OF THE 7 FACES	S, Am	£8.95	6	6	6	6
SERPENT'S LAIR	B	£4.95	1	3	2	3
KING SOLOMON'S MINES	C	£9.95	5	4	5	5

KEY: Am-Amstrad, **C**-Commodore 64, **S**-Spectrum, **B**-BBC

d's Mailbag

but I appreciate the annoyance of having to be word-perfect. The White Wizard is firmly of the opinion that you should be able to solve puzzles in adventures without having to waste too much time on vocabulary problems. What do other readers think? Should, for example, more games include a VOCABULARY command?

Finally, I regularly receive letters from readers asking for games suitable for apprentice adventurers. This is a very difficult question to answer, and I'm inclined to say that there is no such thing as a good 'beginner's adventure'. You can always dive in at the deep end and be sure of finding your feet sooner or later. As a general rule, however, if you haven't played adventures before, stick to the most popular games – then if you do get stuck you'll find there's plenty of help around, both on these pages and elsewhere.

Few adventures are too difficult to crack provided you follow some basic guidelines. The first thing to do of course is make a map. The next thing that helps is to find out how the program actually works. For example, if a game says 'You can't do that' every time you enter something, does that mean 'I don't understand' or 'You can't do that ...' or 'You can't do that here'?

The best way round problems like these is to test the program by typing in nonsense. Enter 'QWTY MGKL'. for example, and see what happens. Little tricks like this can help you work out what input the program is expecting. If any readers have any interesting hints or tips about the actual playing of adventure games (as opposed to the solving of particular problems) than the White Wizard would certainly be interested in hearing them, with a view to publishing them on these hallowed pages.

In the meantime, I'd just like to say how much I've enjoyed hearing from you all. Your letters are a joy to read, and without them Adventureworld would be all the poorer. See you next month.

ADVENTURE NEWS

No new titles

1984 ended on a sad note for some adventure houses. Martech, Phipps Associates, and Virgin have all decided against releasing further adventure titles unless the market improves.

'We move in the way the market dictates,' said Virgin's Hugh Band, 'and it's not currently pointing at main-stream adventures.' Will 1985 prove him right or wrong? Your purse-strings will decide ...

More from Level 9

Level 9 are bringing out three new games, entitled *Emerald Isle*, *Price of Magic*, and *Red Moon*. *Emerald Isle* is a new departure for the company – it retails at £6.95 rather than the usual £9.95 required for other Level 9 titles.

'The lower price is being charged because *Emerald Isle* is shorter than our other games,' says Margaret Austin, 'with only 150-plus illustrated locations, compared to the 240 on *Return to Eden*.' The game has you bailing out of your aircraft over an island dominated by an exotic civilisation from which you must escape.

The other two Level 9 releases, both with graphics, are *Price of Magic* and *Red Moon*. These will be full-scale games, changing hands at the usual £9.95. More details next month.

Karn sequel

Interceptor are bringing out the long-awaited *Empire of Karn*, sequel to the very successful *Heroes of Karn*. The game should be coming into the shops as you read this, priced £7.00, initially for the Commodore 64.

THE PCG HELPLINE

STUCK in a game? Tearing your hair out? Check out the following offers of help from fellow adventurers. And if you're just sitting back in your armchair and feeling smug and satisfied having cracked your latest game, why not write in and add your name to the list?

Don't forget – if you're writing to anyone on the Helpline and want a reply, do enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you have a problem with an adventure, or want to offer help, the address is **Helpline, Personal Computer Games, 62 Oxford Street, London W1A 2HG** ... on postcards only, please.

Remember, only one cry for help per reader each month so that we can fit you all in. You can, of course, offer help on as many games as you are qualified to do so. If you include your telephone number, bear in mind that you may receive many calls.

Aid for adventure addicts

Here we go! This month's helpful hints for anguished adventurers. Use the Clue Code at the end of each problem to identify a square on the grid.

Starting at that position, read every second letter until you have a complete sentence.

When you reach the end of a row, go back to the beginning of the next line and carry on.

1. Can't get the coin from the compost heap in Level 9's *Return to Eden*? This should help clear matters up. (Clue Code A1).

2. Use this to get the better of the witch with the golden staff in *Twin Kingdom Valley*. (Clue Code D1).

3. Having trouble with the pirate in *Heroes of Karn*? This should help . . . (Clue Code C2).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	E	X	A	X	T	O	M	P	U	Q
B	S	X	H	R	R	O	O	Z	O	N
C	M	K	P	H	N	A	Q	D	Z	I
D	S	M	I	I	L	S	V	S	E	M
E	R	A	D	L	A	L	G	E	G	R
F	E	T	R	H	T	A	R	N	G	Y
G	Q	O	L	U	Z	A	O	R	M	E
H	N	F	Q	I	Q	N	R	D	T	H
I	P	I	I	M	L	F	M	I	N	R
J	O	S	O	T	S	T	V	W	N	R

Help offered

Sherlock
Iain Moring, 54 Kynance Gdns, Stanmore, London

Heroes of Karn
Tom Hunter, 3 St Hilda's Court, Whitby, N Yorks Tel. Whitby 600767

Colossal Adventure, Heroes of Karn, The Hobbit, Voodoo Castle, Hulk
Chris Eastwood, 418 Thorney Leys, Fox Meadow, Witney, Oxon

Twin Kingdom Valley, Golden Baton
Keith Randle, 16 Kildermorie Close, Colchester Tel. Colchester 841165

Knights Quest, Inca Curse, Ship of Doom, Mountains of Ket, Planet of Death, Espionage Island, The Hobbit, Pharaohs Tomb, Magic Mountain, Colossal Adventure, Golden Apple, Velnor's Lair
Mr D W Small, 14 Meare Est., Woburn Green, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 0DX Tel. 06285 24529

Time Machine, Invincible Island, Urban Upstart, Lords of Time, Snowball, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Sherlock, The Hobbit
Euan Terras, 9 Leslie Terrace, Prestwick, Ayrshire KA19 1LN

Pimania, Valhalla, all Artic and Level 9 adventures, Twin Kingdom Valley
Nicholas Farina, Regency Bar, Church St, Accrington, Lancashire Tel. 0254 32394 (5-6pm). More chance of reply if you write

Zodiac, House of Death, Ship of Doom, Espionage Island
Simon Ross, 33 Cromwell Road, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2LW Tel. 08675 5869

Heroes of Karn
Steve Syrett, 28 Fairstone Close, Mill Lane, Hastings PN35 5EZ

Twin Kingdom Valley, The Hobbit, Lords of Midnight, Urban Upstart
James Elliot, 266 Carseview, Tullibody, Alloa, FK10 2SU

Help Wanted

The Count (Vic 20)
Where does the count go after breaking the coffin lock?
Margaret Hopkinson, 45 Campion Road, Ipswich, IP2 0LJ Tel. 0473 59751

Heroes of Karn
How do you open the clam and kill the spirit?
Anon, 15 Boscombe Overcliff Drive, Bournemouth, Dorset BH5 1LN

System 15000
How to get information from Selcra Secs
Tom Hunter, 3 St Hilda's Court, Whitby, North Yorks Tel. Whitby 600767

Colditz
Where do you find the code for the combination lock?
Anon, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury, CT3 3AL Tel. Nonington 840319

Urban Upstart
Any help appreciated.
Darren Medcraft, 2 The Point, Ruislip Gardens, Middlesex, HA4 6LT

Magic Mountain
How do I get past the first few rooms and through the maze?
Dominic Heaney, 5 Brook Avenue, Dagenham, Essex RM10 9TJ Tel. 01 593 5056

Hulk
How do I pull the ring, get bio-gem, and escape from the underground room?
Robin Seamer, 28 Windermere Walk, Heatherside, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1RP

Twin Kingdom Valley
What do I do with the Secret of Life?
Roy Johnstone, 75 Pinehurst Road, Anfield, Liverpool, L4 2TX Tel. 051 263 7462

Pyramid 2000 (TRS 80)
How do you get past the green serpent?
J P Bland, 4 Laurel Court, Stonehaven, Kincardineshire, AB3 2GD

Magic Mountain
Any help appreciated.
Graeme Kellet, 8 Grange Road, Cleckheaton, W Yorks, BD1A 3DY

The Hobbit
How do I get out of the goblin's dungeon and what do I do in the elven king's cellar?
Shaun Morris, 34 Wyther Park Crescent, Armley, Leeds, LS12 2RY

Pilgrim's Progress
What should I do when I come across the three men asleep in the road?
David Dew, 4 Highfield Way, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 2PR

Sword of Hrakel (Vic 20)
How do you find the axe and kill the duck?
Stephen Bowes, 104 Western Road, Goole, North Humberside, DN14 6RD

Planet of Death (Spectrum)
Where do I find the laser gun?
Roy Palmer, Gosfield School, Halstead, Essex, CO9 1PF

The Hobbit (BBC)
How do you get into the barrel and do you kill the butler?
Ian Newcombe, 7 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 7SH

Hulk (Spectrum)
How do I block the gas outlet? (Will give Hobbit tips in return)
Stephen Fitzgerald, 10 Highfield Drive, Ickenham, Middlesex, UB10 8AL

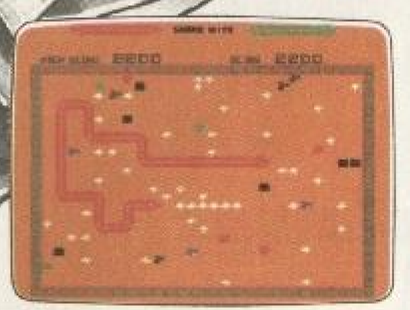
Sherlock
Can't open safe without Basil shooting me. Can't enter Fender's house, or Basil's in London.
Paul Hobbs, 124 Winchester Road, Shirley, Southampton, Hants, SO1 5RP

Valhalla
Where's Krank's Hall?
Alex Marsh, 16 Ian Road, Billericay, Essex, CM12 0JX

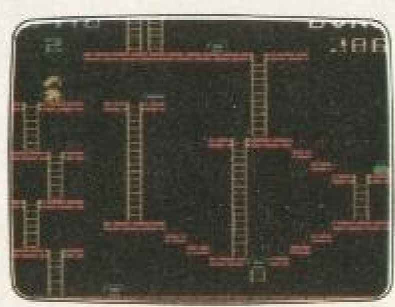
Planet of Death (Spectrum)
How to get the rope off the tree and get down the hole.
Alun Brooks, 24 Braehead Avenue, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, ML5 5ET


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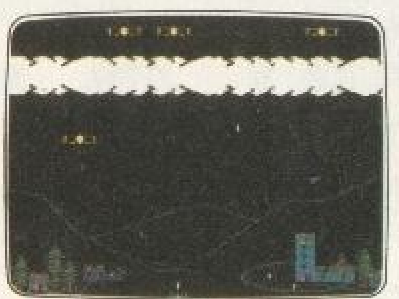
SILVER RANGE Seeing



001 Arcade VIC 20 (UNEXPANDED)
SNAKE BITE – Simply the slitheriest game of its kind.



002 Arcade VIC 20 (UNEXPANDED)
MICKEY THE BRICKY – Four screens packed with fun.



003 Arcade BBC MICRO B
BIRD STRIKE – Wing the planes and shoot the pigeons.



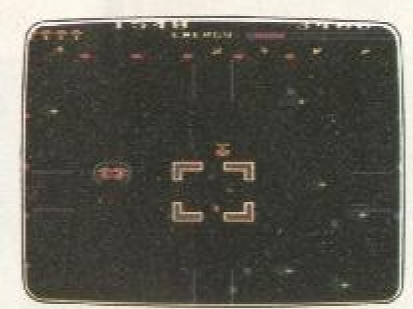
004 Arcade BBC MICRO B
GOLD DIGGER – The hazards of digging for gold down under.



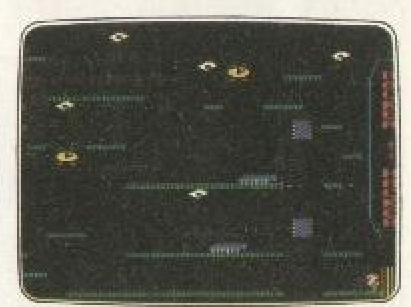
005 Arcade BBC MICRO B
DUCK! – Comedy and music in this duck shoot.



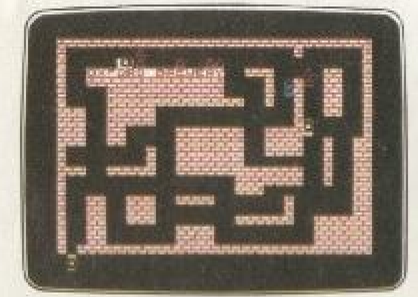
013 Arcade BBC MICRO B
ACID DROPS – Fly through to tackle the mutant spinners.



022 Arcade BBC MICRO B
ESTRA – Recover the sacred statue of Estra the snake god.



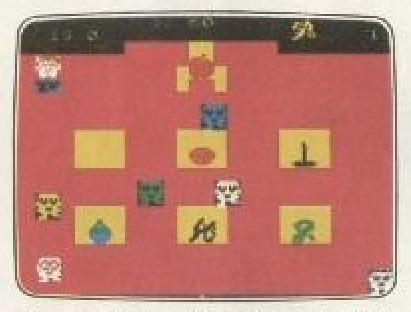
023 Arcade/Strategy BBC MICRO B
THE HACKER – Terminal to modem, telephone network to mainframe.



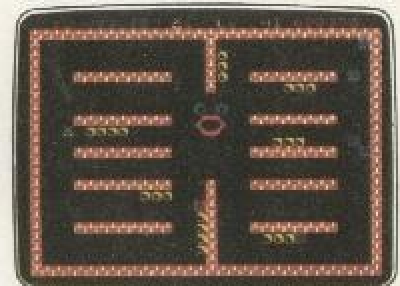
006 Arcade SPECTRUM 16K/48K
RUN BABY RUN – Multi-car cop chase and shoot-out.



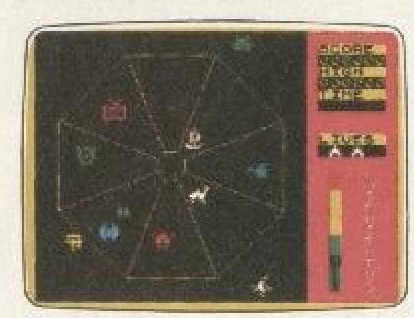
009 Arcade SPECTRUM 16K/48K
TERRA FORCE – Terra man defends earth against all odds.



010 Arcade SPECTRUM 16K/48K
MENACE – What happens when teacher turns his back.



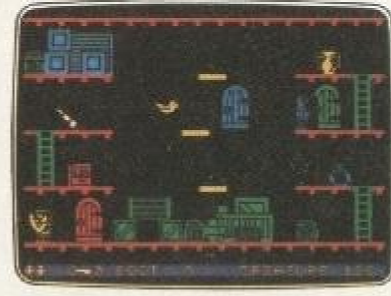
021 Arcade SPECTRUM 16K/48K
CRAZY CAVERNS – Ten crazy caverns, ten hungry mouths to feed.



007 Arcade SPECTRUM 48K
EXODUS – Strange creatures emerging from the pits.



014 Arcade/Strategy SPECTRUM 48K
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016 Arcade Adventure SPECTRUM 48K
BOOTY – Twenty holds crammed full of pirate loot.



008 War Game SPECTRUM 48K
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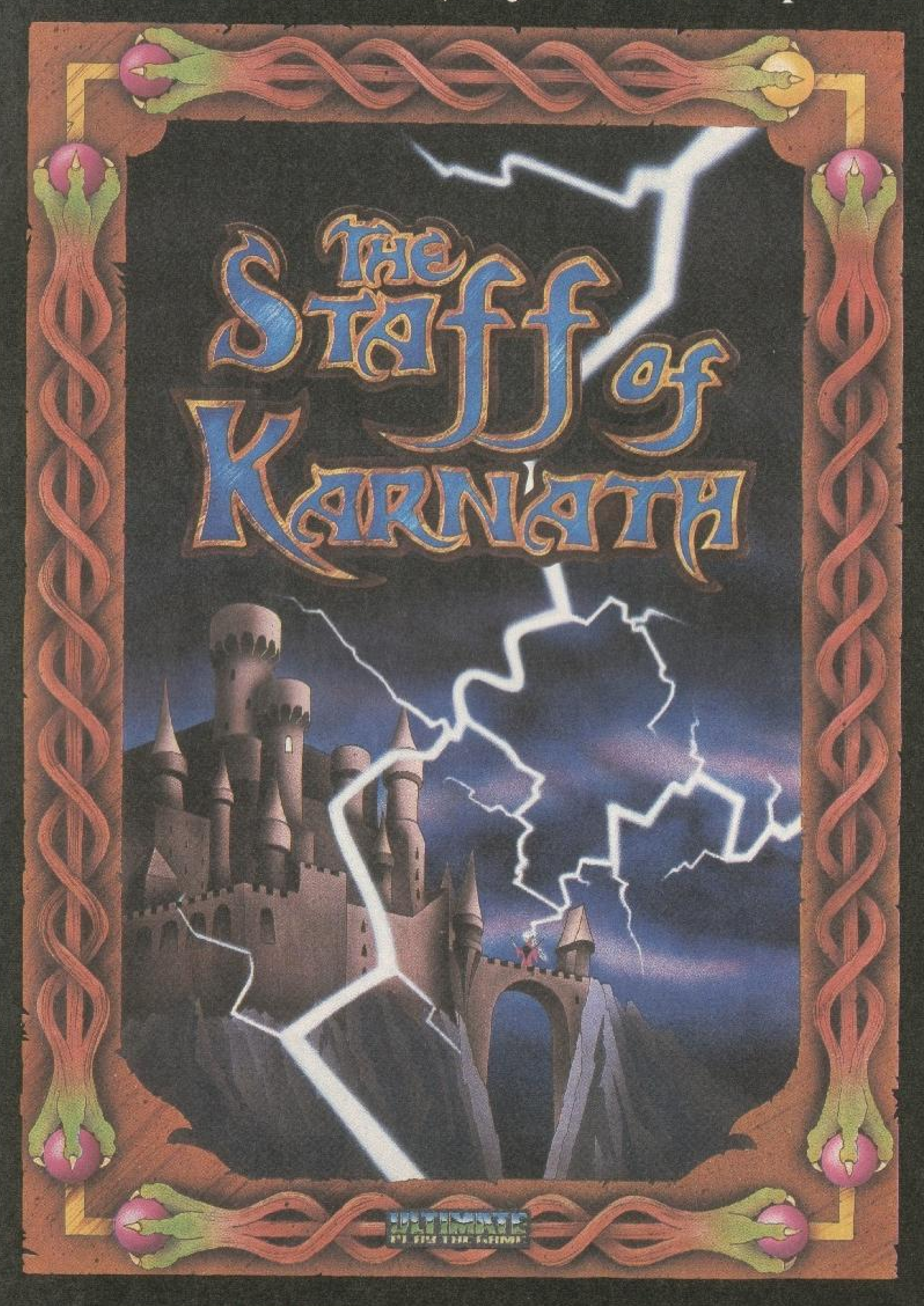
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and all good software retail outlets. Also available from
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU
(P&P included) Tel: 0530 411485

THE GREAT CHARIOT RACE

Two more plucky gamesters fight it out in our dreaded high-score test room.

I sing of arms and the men. Two valiant gladiators from the Midlands of England entered the Challenge Chamber this month for a classical play-off on Micro-Antics' unexpanded Vic game *Chariot Race.*

Lee Simpson, 14, of Tuxford in Notts, is a Vic veteran, having received his machine way back in November 1983. He buys 'a couple of games a month', which he pays for with the huge amounts of money he earns doing a paper round. *Chariot Race* is his favourite game, but if he gets bored with it he can always try something he's written himself – such as *Race Night*, a horses and betting program. Soon, Lee intends to embark on a study of the mysteries of machine code.

From Walsall comes 15-year-old charioteer **Simon Grainger**. He's had his Vic for six months and is still very happy. Apart from *Chariot Race,* He's very keen on Imagine's *Mega-Vault.* Unlike Lee, Simon doesn't program – and has no intention of learning. Playing the game's the thing for him.

And so they reached that most mysterious and forbidding of all arenas, that Colosseum of computer games, where wallies are thrown to the lions and the brave win their laurels – the Challenge Chamber. The chariots were ready and waiting. The object of the game is to survive and win a twenty-lap race against some of the nastiest drivers since Ben Hur. Out of the walls project buttresses into which you must force other chariots in order to score points. Gauge monitor speed and pushing power, and if you go too slowly the irate crowd will start to lob fireballs onto the track.

The contest was to be over five races, with the highest average taking the glory and the spoils of victory. Simon was the first to crack the whip and charge away, bumping and crashing his rivals into the walls. The crowd roared, but disaster struck as a lapse of concentration saw him pulped on a buttress for a paltry 2,906 points – 5,000 below his best.

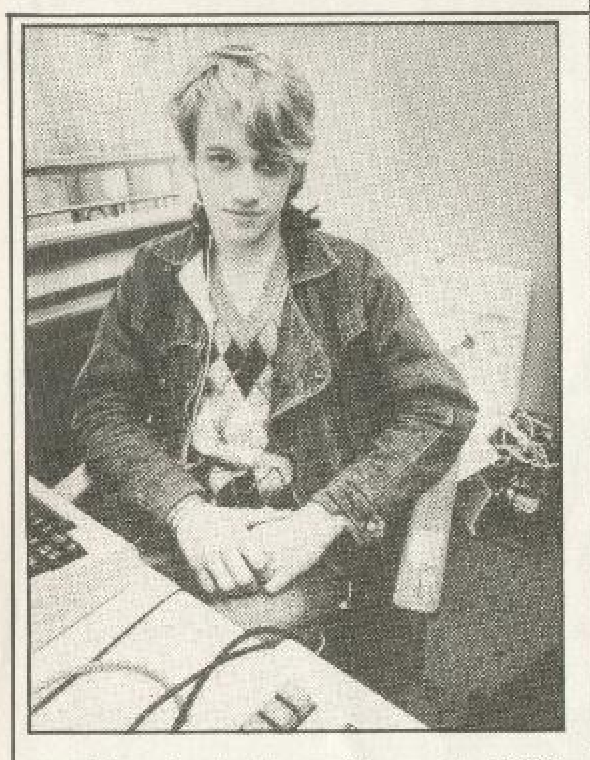
Lee was off now, weaving through clusters of chariots at a tremendous speed. The laps ticked away while the points mounted up; 3,000, 4,000. He looked set for a huge score until, with five laps left, a rival spiked him and into the wall he went at 4,747.

Race Number Two began with Simon cracking away in great style. Keeping speed fairly low at 180 he concentrated on smashing as many opponents as possible. It was mayhem and lots of points. With nine laps left he had over 5,000 points and looked ready for a massive score. But, again – disaster. His team of horses got out of control and Simon was reduced to a heap of bellowing wreckage.

Lee set off at a cracking pace which he maintained throughout. He was scoring points as rapidly as Simon had, but he wasn't getting killed either. On he went,



● Eyes down for the first of five gruelling races







◀ Calm and determined, Simon Grainger

▲ Charioteers taking a well earned break

▶ Lee Simpson, rests on his laurels

reaching the last lap with nearly 7,000 points. He held on to the end and got what all Chariot Racers are looking for – that 2,000 bonus for completing the course finishing on 8,676.

Simon had to produce a big score now – or Lee had to bite the dust – for him to have any chance of catching up. And indeed he showed what he was made of. Through 19 laps he went, calmly ammassing points. He had only one lap to go for that succulent bonus – and he blew it on 6,639.

Over to Lee. He got off to a good start but fell on lap 11 and scored only 4,410. Was it bad enough to allow Simon to get back into contention?

No, because he had another rotten ride. On lap 13 his pushing power got dangerously low and he was smashed into the wall for a mere 3,622. Lee seemed to lose some combative spirit after seeing this: he could only manage 4,649. But driving a chariot is a tiring business.

And so to the last race. Simon needed a massive score, Lee needed only to keep his head to gain a crushing victory. Simon started off with the bit between his teeth as well as the horses'. Determination was written in every line of his face, and translated into a heap of points on the screen. Once more, though, he couldn't survive to collect that essential bonus. Death on 6,114.

Would Lee let his lead go for nothing and snuff it on the first lap? Could his nerve hold?

It certainly could. He only made a score of 3,172, but it was enough to give him a resounding victory with an average of 5,136 to Simon's 4,331. Hail the conquering hero!

But what of the loser. Should the Chamber Master's thumb stay up or down? Did Simon deserve to be thrown to the Master's hungry lions? No, the Master's heart was filled with mercy and a touch of admiration for the courageous way he battled through on a day when the Gods were obviously against him.

MUM'S THE WORD

IN THE MAGNANIMOUS MASTER'S MONSTROUSLY MASSIVE MAIL-BAG

Dear Chamber Master,
The score I sent in for *Pogo Joe* could have been higher, but my mum made me turn it off. I had 27 left and I was on screen 153. Could you please inform my mum that 11.30 pm is NOT too late to go to bed and it is worth being late for school in the morning to get my score printed in a great magazine like PCG.
Steven Weaver,
Strathavan, Larnarkshire

Well, Steven, the Master sympathises. But he cannot enter into correspondence with individual mothers. As for being late for school, it's so long since the Chamber Master was at one that he can't remember if it's worth getting there on time or not.

However, you've succeeded in one very important thing – getting your score published. Here goes:

POGO JOE (CBM 64)

★1,047,260 Steven Weaver, Strathavan, Lanarkshire

Dear Chamber Master,
I write to you in agony ... after spending five hours playing *Quo Vadis*, and reaching the centre-bottom of the map, my mother TURNED OFF THE TV!

My strength was still 100% and the last time I looked at my score it was 462,100. Not one word of apology can I force out of my dear matriarch. I am sure the sceptre was only a couple of caverns away, so I hope to return there soon (when she isn't around) and actually get it.
Mark Trower,
Nuthall, Notts.

Oh, dear. More mother trouble. What is to be done about them? They've got to have some time to watch the telly – or even to play a few games themselves. The Master urges gamesters to be more understanding. Mothers have a very difficult job and it can't be easy for them watching their children playing Quo Vadis *for five hours at a stretch.*

But let's have a few more letters on this touchy subject. Why don't you mums write in and tell us your feelings?

And, finally, a word about scores on the latest Ultimate games. On *Knight Lore* the Master will only accept entries for completed games – give the number of days it took you to do it. On *Underworlde* don't bother sending in high scores. It's percentages we want.

Get going right away.



The scores to beat

ANCIPITAL (CBM 64)
★ 6,410,933 Homer Perry, London
★ 6,179,503 Gary Insley, Derby
★ 6,081,545 Gary Penn, Berkhamsted

ARABIAN NIGHTS (CBM 64)
★ 31,400 Robert Ireland, Prestatyn
★ 29,850 Daniel Gilbert, Heathfield, Sussex
★ 24,400 Richard Balashaw, S. Wirral

BEACH HEAD (CBM 64)
★ 996,000 Paul Aveyard, King's Langley
★ 775,750 Paul Harper, Bognor Regis
★ 745,000 Jason Bird, Chelmsford

BEAKY AND THE EGG SNATCHERS (Spectrum)
★ 40,340 Iain Reddick, Kirkcaldy, Fife
★ 29,360 Kristian Legg, Braintree
★ 29,120 Alex Grass, Hitchin

BONGO (Vic 20)
★ 11,027,500 Julian Lusk, London
★ 6,000,000 Colin Geraghty, Blackburn, Scotland
★ 6,000,000 Kenneth Hannah, Blackburn, Scotland

BOZO'S NIGHT OUT (CBM 64)
★ 75 Pints Paul Harper, Bognor Regis
★ 50 Pints Julian Luks, London
★ 50 Pints Sebastian Hanley, London

BUZZARD BAIT (Dragon)
★ 86,100 Derek Liddle, Hartlepool

CHARIOT RACE (Vic 20)
★ 9334 Lee Simpson, Tuxford, Notts.
★ 7623 Simon Grainger, Walsall

CHINESE JUGGLER (CBM 64)
★ 193,925 Vaughan Waylett, Braintree
★ 185,445 Darren Ungless, Frimley Green

CHUCKIE EGG (BBC)
★ 5,127,130 Binesh Patel, Wrexham
★ 4,065,670 Alistair Hindle, Kirkcaldy
★ 3,074,080 Ian Cook, Braintree

CHUCKIE EGG (Spectrum)
★ 14,162,010 Stuart Brewer, Middleton, Manchester
★ 10,338,550 Richard Mazzaferri, Aberdeen
★ 8,079,540 Steven Taylor, Warrington

CODE NAME MAT (Spectrum)
★ 1244 Gary Jarvis, Catford, London
★ 1131 Richard Kuban, Woking
★ 1080 Marcus Honeysett, Bournemouth, Dorset

DEATHCHASE (Spectrum)
★ 617,589 Richard Taylor, Rotherham
★ 514,968 John Dunne, London
★ 418,479 Mark Johnston, Arbroath

DECATHLON (Activision) (CBM 64)
★ 13,370 Henryk Kotowski, Bolton
★ 13,015 Ayham Akcay, London
★ 12,942 Paul Aldridge, Warwick

ENCOUNTER (CBM 64)
★ 632,200 Julian Venus, Winchester
★ 257,800 Robert Love, Essex

FORBIDDEN FOREST (CBM 64)
★ 1,856,478 Stephen Campbell, Dumfries
★ 841,401 David Martin, Ramsgate
★ 837,241 John Kelly, Castleford

FLIP AND FLOP (CBM 64)
★ 23,825 Mikko Hyokki, Finland

FORTRESS (BBC)
★ 84,350 Rupert Sadler, Wimborne, Dorset
★ 40,000 Alun Phillips, Formby

FORTY NINER (ZX81)
★ 150,000 Richard Hall, Tamworth
★ 64,195 Stephen Crosland, Dunblane
★ 59,976 Derek Grubb, Glenrothes

FRAK (BBC)
★ 20,000,200 Paul O'Malley, Romsey
★ 2,046,900 David Buttimore, Pembroke
★ 1,105,950 Andrew Wilson, Aberlady, Scotland

GHOSTBUSTERS (CBM 64)
★ 25,900 Anthony Ford, Loughton, Essex

GRIDRUNNER (Vic 20)
★ 744,100 Stephen Tomlinson, Ashton
★ 542,420 Steven Bell, Barking
★ 333,790 Paul Maidment, Tilehurst

GUARDIAN (CBM 64)
★ 255,200 Carl Lyons, Huddersfield
★ 127,050 Alex Peat, Twickenham

HIGH NOON (CBM 64)
★ 340,500 Peter Lawrence, Bletchley
★ 137,350 Glen Dawson, Dorchester

JAMMIN' (CBM 64)
★ 1,084,534 R. Banfield, London
★ 887,061 Duncan Heath, Norwich
★ 699,573 Cameron Heath, Norwich

LOCO (CBM 64)
★ 1,019,750 Kari Lahtinen, Finland
★ 1,000,000 Paul Harper, Felpham

LUNAR JETMAN (Spectrum)
★ 382,520 John Elliott, Falkirk
★ 317,870 Nicholas Booth, Clevedon, Avon
★ 203,810 David Martin, Ramsgate

MUSHROOM MANIA (Oric)
★ 375,184 Chris Swift, Bradford

PERILS OF WILLY (Vic 20)
★ 39,980 Paul Caines, Wolverhampton
★ 26,360 Adrian Fleming, Wigan
★ 25,980 Mathew Spencer, Harlow

POSTER PASTER (CBM 64)
★ 9,800 David Sharp, Dalgety Bay, Scotland

REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS (CBM 64)
★ 2,956,068 Scott Walsh, Batley
★ 2,623,425 Colin Bradbury, Cowdenbeath
★ 2,600,000 Andrew Jones, Prestatyn

SHEEP IN SPACE (CBM 64)
★ 2,450,000 Tom Burton, Saxmundham, Norfolk
★ 1,831,352 James Atherton, Sheffield
★ 1,147,000 John Nellis, Birmingham

SABRE WULF (Spectrum)
★ 5 mins. 48 secs. Philip Sill, Steyning, Sussex
★ 6 mins. 45 secs. Ian Law, Aberdeen

STOP THE EXPRESS (Spectrum)
★ 14,800 Steven Jarman, Newtown, Powys
★ 14,730 Jamie Westwood, Brighouse

SUPER PIPELINE (CBM 64)
★ 1,238,050 Rodney Bond, Billericay
★ 490,035 Sheila Bell, North Shields

TORNADO LOW LEVEL (Spectrum)
★ 101,474 Richard Mazzaferri, Aberdeen

TRASHMAN (Spectrum)
★ 27,262 Robert Venn, Reading
★ 27,420 Simon Lowe, Huddersfield
★ 27,222 Robert Pocock, Buxton

OK – I'll dare the Challenge Chamber

Name ....
Address ....
....
Telephone no. (if possible) ....
Game .... Machine ....
My score is: .... scored on (date) ....
in a game lasting ...... mins ...... secs.
Signed ....

(This portion to be filled in by witness)
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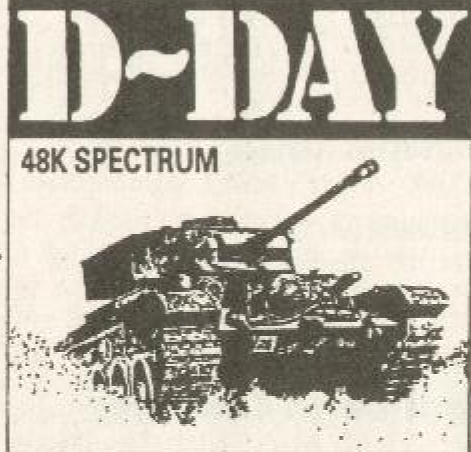
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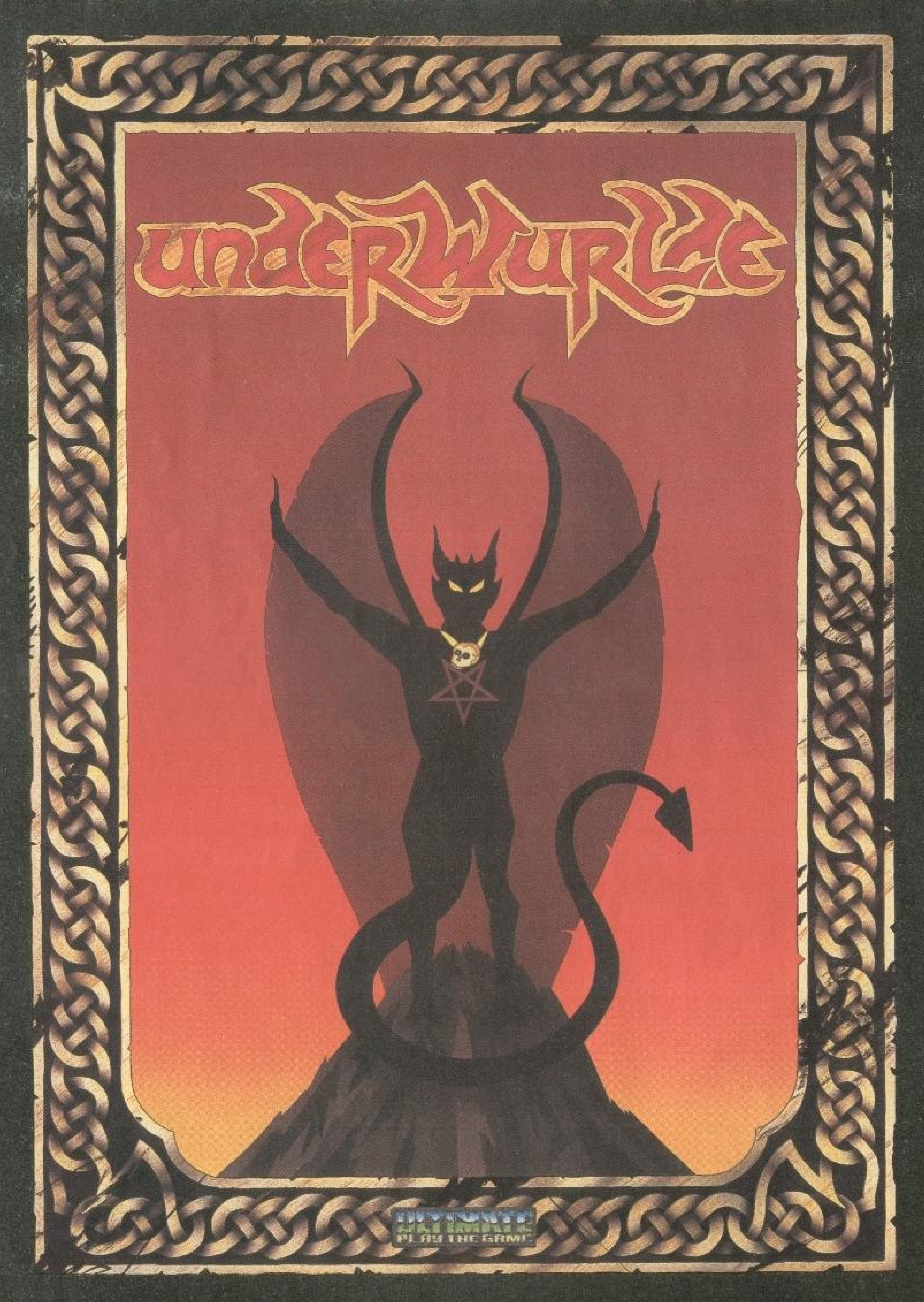
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TRICKS 'N TACTICS

PCG tips on high scoring in your favourite games

TIPS FOR THE ELITE FROM THE ELITE

Two experts on the Acornsoft mega-game *Elite* have pooled resources for your benefit. Stephen Corcoran – who's achieved 'Elite' status – and Marcus Jeffery (Deadly) reveal how you can join them.

1 The first problem most people are going to have, is getting the feel of the controls. This takes quite a while, but with practice you'll make it. Before trying to play the game, spend a little while flying around and then re-docking at the initial space station orbiting Lave.

At the start of the game, people tend to find joysticks easiest, but the keyboard will give you more control and quicker reactions (necessary when you become more proficient), so it's best to persevere with the keyboard from the beginning.

2 Before going any further, read the flight training manual thoroughly. Yes, we know you want to play the game, but the information you'll get from reading the manual is invaluable, and will give far more tips than we could ever cover here.

3 OK, so the first thing you must do is make lots of money, to fully equip your ship. Travel first to the planet Zaonce carrying agricultural goods up to your 100 credit limit. Then to Isinor with Computers. Finally on to Quitiri with a cargo of furs.

Moneymaking then consists of alternating between these two planets carrying the cargo mentioned – rather boring, but if you want to equip your Cobra. . .

The best items to trade in appear to be Computers and Furs, between Rich Industrial and Poor Agricultural. To begin with, always pick reasonably safe planets – you'll see these on page 47 of the manual.

4 As you start earning money, you'll want to buy some ship equipment. The order in which you buy things is really up to you, but as a general guide:

Large Cargo Bay – allows you to carry 35t, giving bigger profits per trip.

ECM System – there's nothing worse than surviving through an epic battle, just to be blown up by a roaming missile which you couldn't hit.

Beam Laser – replace your front laser. Enemy will blow up much quicker. It saves all that messing about. Although a beam laser is quoted at 1000 CR, the price of the previous pulse laser will be returned.

Fuel Scoops – not absolutely essential to begin with, but once you have enough money and equipment, they're a useful addition. Even when you have a full cargo, you can pick up alien items – ie motionless Thargiets.

Docking Computers – on the disk system, these are quite slow, so aim for the space station as normal, and use them at the last minute.

On a cassette version, you should buy these as your second item of extra equipment, and use them as soon as the space station is within range (when the 'S' appears on the screen).

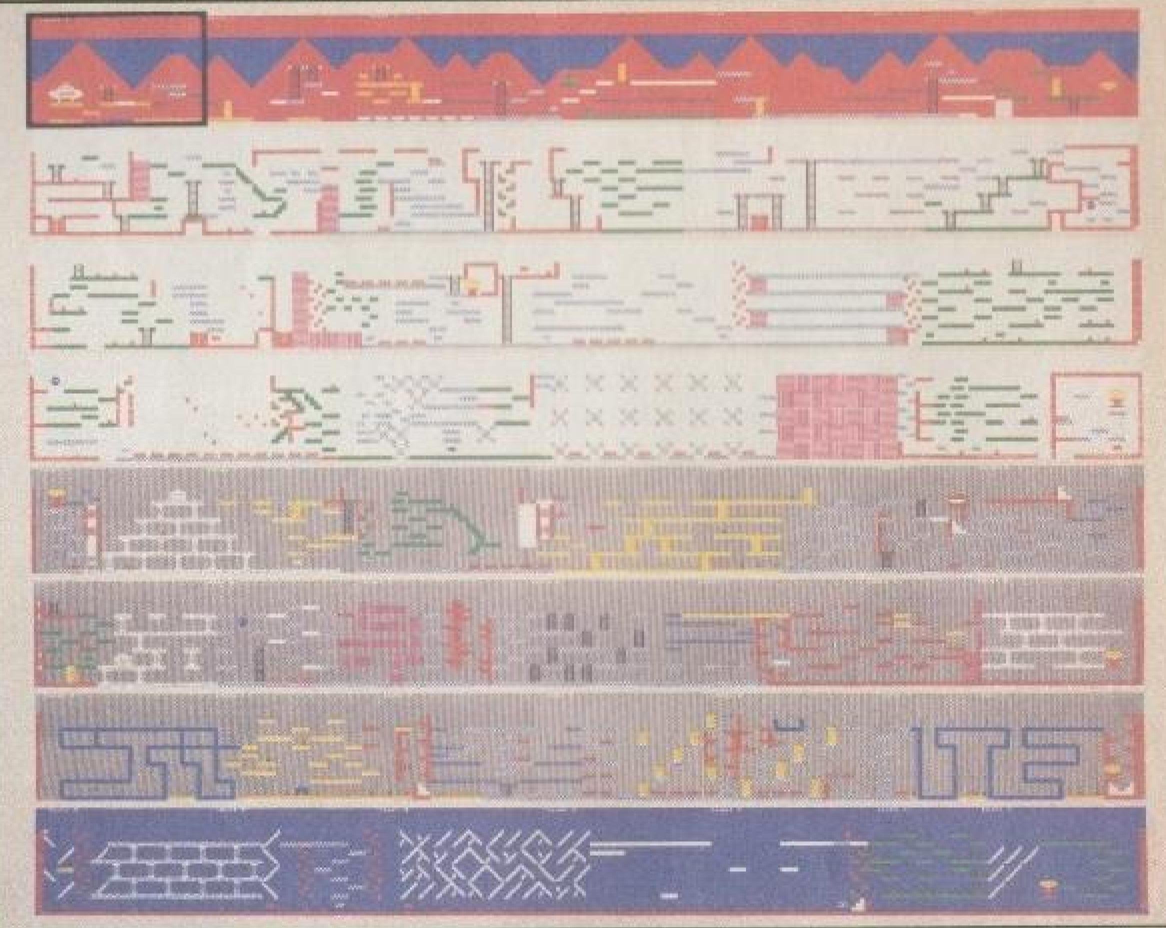
You will automatically dock, saving lots of time when trading.

Military Laser – as soon as possible, replace your front beam laser with a military one. The enemy will have a tendency to blow up as soon as you touch them.

In all of the above cases, don't buy equipment if it means you're going to have to make a trip without a full cargo bay.

It is not really worth buying lasers for anything other than the

50 SCREENS OF TOPAZ



Here's a useful aid to playing the new gold range game from Firebird for the Commodore 64, *Demons of Topaz*. It shows the game's entire playing area comprising 56 screens.

There are eight levels of seven screens which scroll left and right. One of the game's most enjoyable features is the weapon you're armed with – a boomerang, and it always comes back.

Chris Anderson

KNIGHT LORE: T

OBJECT

HIDDEN OBJECT

You need to slide the chest at the right moment to get to the upper exit.

OBJECT

Jump OVER the ball as it falls. Remember, holding down the jump key gives a longer jump.

Jump onto the block above the ball and nudge it toward the upper exit.

POSSIBLE STAR

You can collect the object and escape by standing on the furthermost stone and allowing it to sink half-way before getting off. The stone is your escape route.

Look out for sinking stones!

POSSIBLE START LOCATION

HIDDEN OBJECT
It's easy enough getting the hidden object – but how do you get out safely?

OBJECT

OBJECT

The wizard's room – don't enter while you're a wolf or you'll be attacked. You must place in the cauldron the object which appears above it. A total of 14 are needed.

The blocks disappear on contact. Jump from the door just as the ball is rising and hold down the jump key so that you can immediately make a second jump off the blocks.

Let the spikes fall – THEN push one set of chests from under the and move quickly through the gap.

HIDDEN OBJECT

It's booby trapped. Get ready to run as soon as you've collected the object.

POSSIBLE START L

he ultimate map

No doubt this won't be the only **Knight Lore** map printed by a magazine, but we're confident it's the best – because it shows all 128 locations exactly as they look in the game.

To do it we enlisted the help of Dimension Graphics, a company which makes its living by producing colour printouts of screens from computer games.

The sophisticated techniques they've developed allow them to freeze a Spectrum or BBC program at any instant. Then, using a custom-built interface they can print out the picture on screen on their £14,000 Tektronix 4691 ink jet colour printer.

Doing this for all 128 screens was quite a task, but Dimension Graphics' Paul Winder didn't mind too much since it gave him an excuse to spend a weekend playing the game.

The finished map measures 6ft by 6ft – we had to reduce it slightly to fit the page! **Knight Lore** was our joint Game of the Month last issue. It's from Ultimate and it's for the 48K Spectrum.

ELITE TIPS

contd

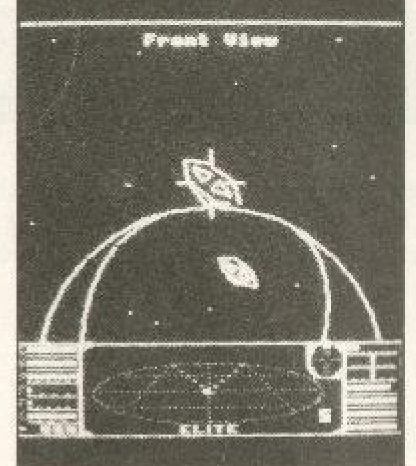
front view, because they are too difficult to control – all the controls are either backwards, or worse.

The exception to this is if you've decided to use joysticks, in which case you can turn the joystick upside-down to give you normal controls out of the rear view.

5 One of the most awkward problems in *Elite* is docking, yet there is a very simple procedure to follow for this:

- Find the space station, using your compass.
- Aim for a point midway between the space station and the planet, with the station on your right and the planet on your left.

  A horizontal line across your sights should intersect the station and the nearest point on the planet.
- Keep going until the station shows as a green dot (assuming no escape pod) on your radar, then slow down.
- Look right. The space station entry port will be visible (remember, it is always on the planet side), so you can stop as soon as you are aligned.
- Look forward, rotate so that the station is in the sights of the front view, and speed towards it.
- As you approach, slow down to match rotation during entry.



This is not necessarily the quickest way to enter a station, but it is a useful failsafe method.

6 Now to the important part – earning ratings. If you've got a disk system, and want to make lots of kills, the easiest thing to do is fly directly out of a space station, until it only just fills the inner part of your sights, then stop and turn around.

Fire once on the space station with your front lasers, then blow up everything that shows, whilst moving at minimum speed towards the station. With military lasers and a little care, nothing will escape.

When you reach the station, hyperspace to the next planet. This is fine for disk users, but I'm afraid that the best advice for cassette users is to hit anarchy systems.

7 Both winners of the monthly competition for October have attained *Elite* status. If you've reached Competent, which should happen quite quickly once you get the hand of the game, you're probably wondering how long it'll take to make the next stage. Here's the answer.

After each 256 ships destroyed, you get the message 'RIGHT ON COMMANDER' at the bottom of the screen. You'll get this once in the middle of the Competent stage, and about ten times during Dangerous. In all, you'll have to destroy arounds 6,500 ships to make Elite.

That's a lot of playing time, so you'd better get on with it. Good luck.

Zapping Zombies

The living dead of *Zombie Zombie* on the Spectrum don't stand much of a chance against Christopher Hester. Here are some of his tips on how to bury those evil creatures for good.

1 Always build up the outer wall of the city. The ants in *Ant Attack* may have stayed inside, but the zombies won't ... they may wander out into the desert and you'll never find them!

2 Place pointers around the outside wall so you can find your way back to the helipad easily if you crash.

3 NEVER drop your helicopter onto a high wall which you cannot walk back up. You may jump out and not be able to use your helicopter until you lose a life.

4 NEVER trap yourself in a sealed-off area – if the zombies can't kill you and you can't get out, you'll have to pull the plug!!

5 For maximum protection when you start you can, if you want, build a wall right round the helipad – it stops the zombies running up to you if they materialize nearby. You can easily lose all your lives from zombies at the helipad. A wall three blocks high will do – but you must leave a gap of one block for access.

6 To get a fantastic city with long walls and no bits scattered about, kill off all the zombies except the last one of five. Trap him, then go around with your helicopter building up your walls and joining those already there. Then, when you're satisfied with your work, kill off the last zombie and the city can be saved to tape.

JOUST RIGHT



Ace arcade player Julian Rignall of Tregaron, Dyfed is no slouch when it comes to his home computer. He's got an enormous 10,117,050 on *Joust* for the Atari. So, lances at the ready and pay heed to Joustin' Julian's tips.

- It is best to hover near the top of the screen and drop on the buzzard riders' heads rather than chase them about the screen.
- Practise bouncing off the top of the screen at high speed – this is a useful tactic to catch the shadow lords by surprise.
- On egg waves start at the top of the screen and work your way down. Any hatching buzzard riders will always be below you, so reducing your chances of being dismounted.
- To kill the pterodactyl, first turn away from it. When it moves to attack you, turn sharply when it is very close to you and it will fly straight into your lance and die.
- On higher levels do not fly over the lava pits. If you do, you will be instantly caught by the fire troll and drawn into the lava.

Kosmik Joke

Deep advice from Jason Wingate, a London admirer of *Kosmik Pirate* on the Spectrum.

1 Load game.

2 Curse, and go back to shop complaining.

MINI TIPS

Scoring high at soccer

Andy Clarke of Baddesley Ensor, Warwickshire reveals how to cream the computer in Commodore's *International Soccer* for the '64.

YOUR KICK OFF. Take the ball with your man and let your other striker rush forward. Move into line behind him as he goes and move forward also. Just as you are about to be tackled, pass the ball forward.

The other striker should get the ball on his head and will continue to head the ball down field. You should now have a good chance at scoring (see below). This works on nearly all levels. It normally works well on human opponents too – especially mothers!

OPPONENTS KICK OFF. Tackle as soon as possible to gain possession. Then pass to the other striker who is running forward as above. With the opposition charging towards your goal you should be able to lose a a few of them with the pace of a good upfield pass.

SCORING. As well as James Baker's diagonal method (PCG November), you can also score quite easily by shooting from just inside the penalty area. Shoot from near the penalty spot – in line with it, but not ON it. Fire and the goalie will dive and usually save it. Don't move at all just hold down the fire button. With luck the ball will rebound to you. Give it one firm kick and you ought to score as the keeper rises and tries to get back into position.

This method works best in conjunction with the two kick off tips above when you have a man in the box and no defenders.

BACK HEEL. This is a possible move, but usually occurs out of pure luck! You need two men – one with the ball centre screen, the other in front and almost out of shot. A pass forward is needed – keep the joystick pushing in the the same direction. The frontman should turn and knock the ball back to you.



Gorf gambits

Gorf has been around a long time on the Vic 20, but it's still very popular. William Church in Liskeard, Cornwall reveals how to crack it.

STAGE 1 ASTRO BATTLES
At the beginning, move as close as you can to the force-field and nab Gorf – you should be able to blow up all of the front line and a few of the second while the aliens are appearing. This is essential in later levels as they start very close to the force-field.

Then move down to the bottom and shoot the aliens until you are left with two or three at the top and one below them. Now you can get a few Gorfs, 'Stopper' Ships, and fast-roving ships which move along the top.

STAGE 2 LASER ATTACK
When the laser ships are firing for the first time you should be able to get the ships on the left of the right formation, and vice versa. Only shoot the laser ships when there are one or two ships left, as they then try to kamikaze you.

STAGE 3 SPACE WARP
This is probably the hardest level. Move about and try to fire single shots into the middle of the screen where the purple dots are. If this doesn't get them, swing from end to end following them as they twirl around. Fire fairly fast – but watch they don't squash you in the middle when they are big. Remember you can move up and down and that the purple dots in the middle tell you which ship is going to attack you.

STAGE 4 THE FLAG SHIP
Stay at the starting point and quickly knock a hole in the force-field. Then fire when the flag ship's 'nose' has reached the end of the screen.

Do this twice. If you don't destroy the flagship after two shots, move to the side as its third fireball will go for you. Then go back to the middle and repeat the procedure until you blow it up.

BATTLING THROUGH

One of the greatest American games of all time, available in Britain on the Atari, Commodore 64 and Spectrum, poses numerous brain-teasing joystick-testing puzzles. Chris Anderson gives his *Boulder Dash* tips, including detailed advice on some of the tough caves.

The ground rules

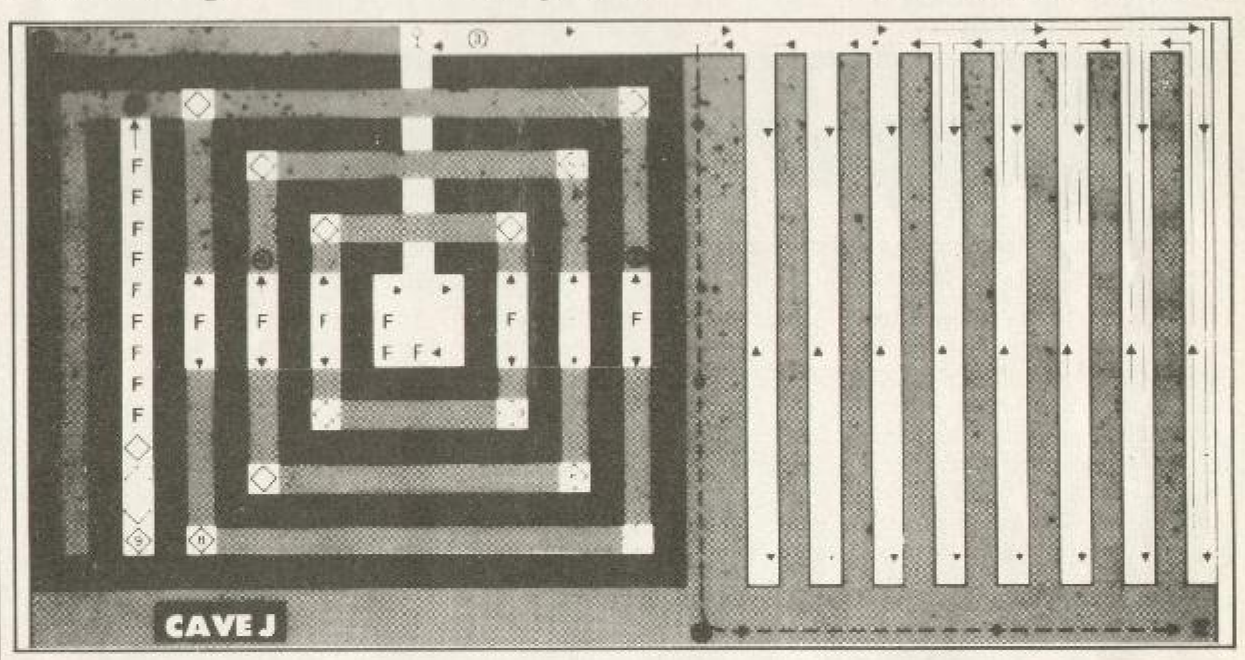
- Don't start a game unless you have plenty of free time available. It's too stressful to stop playing within just an hour or two.
- Don't introduce anyone else to the game unless you're physically strong enough to wrench them off the joystick.
- Don't load the game in the presence of Vic, Oric or BBC owners for whom it isn't available – they may try to steal your computer.
- Force yourself to stop playing at least half an hour before going to bed. This leaves enough time for a quick walk through the night air to ease the tension. Otherwise you'll lie awake all night.

traits to lay ingenious traps for them.

Cave C Maze: Simply a matter of working out an efficient route passing all the diamonds. You should aim to end with the diamond bottom right near the exit. Look out for boulders toppling off walls.

Cave D Butterflies: An easy cave on lower levels. There are boulders in position above the first three butterflies on level one. Just tunnel up to them and move out of the way. On the fourth butterfly there's a boulder at top right of the screen which can easily be pushed into a more suitable position.

- Don't bring down too many boulders onto the amoeba or you may find it hard to escape later.
- Don't seal off the amoeba completely. You should block the last gap yourself, preferably right at the bottom of the screen. Makes it much easier to collect the jewels after the amoeba has metamorphosed.
- If the amoeba has completely escaped, use what remaining time you have to collect the few jewels already created. Could give you an extra life.
- On level one, it's easiest to seal off the right side first, then the top, then the left.
- Take great care collecting jewels – use the freeze button.



General playing tips

Digging down near boulders is far more dangerous than moving sideways or upwards. Avoid it if you can. If you can't, beware those toppling boulders.

Make full use of the fire-button control which allows you to collect a diamond, dig earth or move a boulder from a neighbouring square. On screen one, for example, you can collect many extra diamonds like this and when you're letting fire flies loose, it's far safer that way.

Remember the habits of fireflies and butterflies. Fireflies always turn left whenever they can, butterflies turn right. You can exploit these

Cave F Firefly Dens: Clear an empty space for boulders to fall into and then make a clear route to the top of the screen. Move left to the top den, and then as the fireflies move to the backs of the dens, move down, clearing all four entrances. The fireflies will move up and back round the route you've cleared. You follow them, picking up the diamonds, and then leaving the path, making sure you move under a boulder to seal your escape path. On higher levels you will need to do the same, the opposite way round.

Cave G Amoeba: Great cave this, but can be very mean. The main tips are:

It's all too easy to get yourself trapped or killed.

Cave H Enchanted Wall: On level one there's a pesky firefly just above the wall which is quite easy to crush with a boulder. That makes life a lot easier. The wall stays enchanted for quite a while, so don't panic.

Cave J Tracks: The secret is working out a pattern of tracks which will keep the fireflies occupied for as long as possible after being released. I've found a comb to be the most successful (see diagram). Fireflies have to travel along each tooth of the comb twice (down and up) giving you time to collect the

BOULDER DASH

diamonds and escape.

There are plenty of different sequences for collecting the jewels (at least on level one). One of the safest is as follows. From the position in the diagram, move left to 1, clearing a diversion. Then enter the catacomb and make your way toward 2 picking up a diamond en route. Clear the earth at 2 from the square above using the firebutton and immediately race back to 3. The chasing firefly will go to 1, giving you time to nip back inside the catacombs.

This time head for 4, picking up another diamond. After releasing the firefly, race straight back across to pick up the diamond at 5. Then it's safe to cross back over and run through that firefly's den to 6, picking up two diamonds. Return the way you came, and head for 7, picking up another diamond.

Once again, the earth at 7 must be cleared using the fire button, and you must wait until the gap in the fireflies is at the top. Immediately you've cleared it, cross to the other side and work round to 8, getting two more gems. Finally you can come back for the four diamonds at 9, completing your level 1 quota.

If you haven't wasted time, you should now be able to leave the catacombs and take the safe exit route marked, before any of the fireflies have returned from their little journey around the comb.

Trying to get the four central diamonds as well (as you must on higher levels) is a bit tougher, but can be done using a similar method. You may have to expand your maze still further, by tunnelling out the space under the catacombs.

Cave K Crowd: You can't afford to waste any time in this one. You should do the left and top of the cave first, working out the fastest routes and remembering to clear plenty of earth, so that you don't get trapped.

On level one you don't have to go through the narrow stepped gap top right of the starting point.

Instead go right along the bottom. This involves bypassing the firefly blocking your way, but that's pretty easy. Nearby is the penultimate jewel, and you can then make your way to the top for the last one.

On level two this method doesn't work. Instead, you actually have to blow a hole in the stepped wall after first clearing the earth from underneath it. It can be done!

Cave M Apocalypse: It's worth getting really good at this screen, as you can eventually pick up an awful lot of points, giving you extra lives for the tough ones which follow. Besides, seeing those butterflies explode into diamonds is really satisfying.

Don't clear a path to the amoeba right at the very start, because if it hasn't grown much by the time the butterflies are alive, they can blow it out of existence.

Cave N Zigzag: Here's another special one, where your tactics are limited purely by the power of your imagination. I've found three completely different ways of solving it, but the most reliable by far is the one shown in the diagram.

First, create a small diversionary maze with a two-tooth comb, then tunnel along the top of the cave, past the boulders. Come down so that you're one square below the boulders. Then you can safely tunnel under them (they fall into position behind you). Keep going until you hit your comb. Then come back and turn up just before you get to the boulders. You're now in the position shown in the diagram.

What you must now do is release all six fireflies, one after another. You do this by using the firebutton, when the firefly is next to the boulder, and then immediately moving at least TWO spaces right. The firefly will then move away left. Once you've got the timing right you can do it every time.

After all six have been released you pull off your masterpiece. Move behind boulder A and push it left to position A. You are then completely sealed off from the fireflies!

Continued overleaf

CAVE N

KEY

Route taken so far

Route to be taken

E Exit F Firefly

Boulder Diamond

Wall B Butterfly

Explosion site

MINI TIPS

Pokes and jumps

Cheat methods on three Spectrum games from Andrea and Duncan McKee of Durham. The pokes are entered after loading the first part of the programs with MERGE"": LIST. The rest of the programs are then loaded by typing RUN.

KOSMIC KANGA

POKE 23994,255 – this gives you 255 lives.

POKE 35156, N – N can be any number from 0 to 255 according to how high you want to jump

HORACE GOES SKIING

POKE 30027,0 and POKE 30644,0 – stops you being charged for skis.

CAVELON

To get to any level hold down keys Q to P and A to L at the same time. The result is a message 'Hi Chris, what do you want?' Press any key 1 to 6 to get onto the level of your choice.

China way to cheat

Interceptor's *China Miner* for the '64 is one of the most difficult platform games on the market. Here's how to make it easier. (We're not sure if this method can be used on Interceptor's new turbo-loaded version of the program.)

1. Type VERIFY and start the tape. This will soon give an error message.

2. Enter LOAD"",1,1 to load the first part of the program.

3. Repeat this step to load the second part.

4. Enter: SYS64738 POKE 32776,0: POKE 33320, number (0-29) – this allows you to start on any screen (depending which number you enter). Then start the game by typing: SYS 33127

Eggsiting tips for Beaky

Fantasy's *Beaky and the Egg Snatchers* is a game that has aroused a lot of interest in Spectrum owners with a desire to nurture rather than destroy. Here's how Kristian Legg of Braintree, Essex makes those little birdies grow.

Phase 1 If you are fast enough you should be able to collect all the eggs, still leaving plenty of magic – this is very important. When the egg-snatchers have collected the eggs from the bottom platform, you can shoot them from the centre platform.

When they collect from the top platform, shoot them while flying above the opposite platform. If they get the eggs from the centre platform, fly to the edge of the screen and shoot them from there.

Do not fly into the egg-snatchers. As soon as you have dropped the last egg into the nest, leave this stage.

●

Phase 2 Fly in a straight line, preferably just below the lowest platform, and try to shoot the spheres over the head of the froogle. Do not run into the spheres. Try to shoot the snowflakes as soon as possible, so that you can shoot the droplets was well.

Shoot the spheres over the froogle when it is asleep, so that it doesn't move. If it does, the spheres will be harmless.

●

Phase 3 Getting worms must have priority over shooting the egg-snatchers. Run away from the worms until they are about level with the nest, then turn and eat them.



Willy train tips

The Perils of Willy is fast becoming a Vic 20 cult. Adrian Fleming revealed the secrets which helped him safely through the game. Here we print his technique for screen seven.

When the train is at the right hand side, jump left for the key. Jump onto the same level as the train. When it approaches, jump over it and onto the platform.

Carry on jumping to get to the top non-collapsible platform. Walk right to the end and jump onto the conveyor belt. Jump right to get the note, let the conveyor belt take you left and then jump right at the end, onto the collapsible platform. (You may need to use the second conveyor belt).

Jump straight up for the key and let the platform collapse. Walk off until you come to the platform that stretches furthest to the right and jump off, getting the key.

Get down to the level of the train, avoiding it as before, and jump upstairs, watching out for balloons. Walk to the far side and get the note, then jump up and walk downstairs, again watching out for balloons.

Wait on the train level and jump the train as before, getting to the top non-collapsible platform. Jump onto the conveyor belt and jump one space from the far-left side of the second belt. When the first balloon is down, jump right for the last note.



MINI TIPS

Cheating at Overdrive

A nameless BBC owner from Solihull reveals how.

Type ?&FE45=10 before load – you get about TRIPLE your normal score! Also if you load up until the instructions, and then type this sequence.

Escape, Ctrl Z, Ctrl L, Escape, List 200, Return.

You will see a line of Basic including the phrase:

BONUS% 43.

Change this to BONUS% 70.

Try it. Using both methods I reached 1,056,765 before getting cramp.

●

Underhand method at Underwurlde

Several readers have told us of a way of getting past the guardians in *Underwurlde* without locating the weapon needed to shoot them. You lower yourself on a rope to the screen next to the guardian. Then swing yourself and come off the rope so that you fly toward it. With luck you will pass it. If you fail, try again at a slightly different height.

One advantage of this method is that the eagles who normally inhabit the terrain past the guardians don't turn up to interrupt your quest.

Roland with extra time

Steven Fraser from Strathclyde gives us our first tips for the Amstrad – on *Roland in Time* and *Punchy*.

ROLAND IN TIME – To get unlimited lives, first enter:

```
MEMORY 4999: LOAD
"rointime", 5000
```

After the program has loaded type POKE 5850,167 (if using the green screen monitor also type POKE 5001,1) and to finally start the game type CALL 5000.

●

PUNCHY – The main difference between the Spectrum version and the Amstrad version is that sausages appear on every screen on the Spectrum but on only three screens on the Amstrad.

The following information allows you to alter the objects that appear on any of the 16 screens. To load the proram enter:

```
MEMORY 8191: LOAD "code", 8192
```

If using the green monitor then type POKE 11276,11: POKE 11277,11: POKE 11278,11: POKE 11279,11: after the game has loaded.

The state of each screen is kept from addresses 11320 (Screen 1) to 11335 (Screen 16).

Firstly to add sausages to every screen type:

```
10 FOR n=11320 to 11335: POKE n,
PEEK (n) OR 1: NEXT
```

To add or remove other objects to/from the screens use the following values with the two poke statements. Punch = 128. Ghosts = 64. Carpet = 32. Custard (bottom) = 16. Custard (top) = 8. Tomato (bottom) = 4. Tomato (top) = 2. Sausage = 1.

To add to the contents type POKE 11319+ (screen no.), PEEK (11319 + screen no.) OR (character value).

To delete do the same, except replace OR by XOR.

To delete do the same, except repalce OR by XOR.

To run *Punchy* type CALL 8192.

BOULDER DASH

continued from previous page

The rest is easy. Go to position D, via B and C. Then make a tunnel down and left. Release butterfly 6, move back along the tunnel, clear the earth under boulder B, move out of the way and POW, nine gleaming jewels for you to collect. The dotted lines show how you can make tunnels to hit butterfly 5 with boulder C, butterfly 4 with boulder D and 3 with E.

That's enough jewels for level one, so you can escape at your leisure. At higher levels you must also use your firefly blocking boulders for the last two butterflies. This means you have to do some firefly dodging at the end.

Cave O Funnel: The enchanted wall goes dead after a couple of seconds, so you have to make very careful preparations. Clear as much earth near the right hand wall of the funnel as you can.

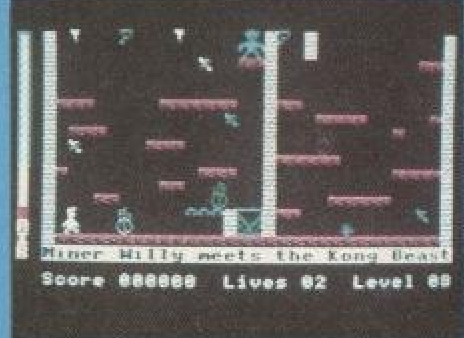
Then go over the top of the wall to the outside and come down carefully to clear the space under the funnel. Then clear as much earth as you can at the bottom of the funnel before letting the first boulder through the wall.

Cave P Enchanted Boxes: Don't try to get all the jewels from just one box. It's virtually impossible, even on level one. It's quite easy to blow holes in the first two boxes, clear them out and still have enough time to pile a few boulders above, ready to cascade through the upper walls.



BASIC LIGHTNING
WHITE LIGHTNING
MACHINE LIGHTNING
LIGHTNING STRIKES AGAIN
THREE HIGH POWERED GRAPHICS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS FOR THE COMMODORE 64.
OASIS SOFTWARE
Totally dedicated to writing very fast, video games, BASIC Lightning is a is a fully structured extension to the Commodore BASIC which adds a staggering 200 reserved words. It allows up to five tasks to run concurrently (one in foreground and four in background). Most of the commands are dedicated to games writing and the sound and graphics commands are unparalleled. Procedures and PASCAL type structured programming commands are also a feature of BASIC Lightning.
As well as the Commodore's own 8 hardware sprites, BASIC Lightning has its own software sprites. Up to 255 can be defined with user selectable dimensions. These can even be several screens wide. They can be scrolled, spun, mirrored, enlarged or inverted with phenomenal speed and smoothness.
A Sprite Generator Program (written in BASIC Lightning) is also supplied and can be used to design, edit and store all your sprites for use in your main program.
White Lightning is a complete games writing package comprising a high level, Forth based, multi-tasking games writing language, the extended BASIC (see BASIC LIGHTNING) and a powerful sprite Generator Program. Programs can even be written in a combination of Forth and Commodore BASIC and the final program, which will run independently of White Lightning, can be marketed with no restrictions whatsoever.
The Basic Lightning part of the package can be used to experiment quickly and easily before the Forth program is developed.
The speed of White Lightning has to be seen to be believed and a full demo is included. As with Basic Lightning, hardware sprites are supported, together with 255 software sprites which can be scrolled, spun, reflected, enlarged or inverted.
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The BASIC Lightning Sprite Generator Program is also included in the package.
Commodore 64 Machine Lightning is probably the most advanced games writing utility available on any micro. It comes in 4 parts:
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(disk) £39.95
I enclose my cheque/P.O. for £
Name
Address
Telephone

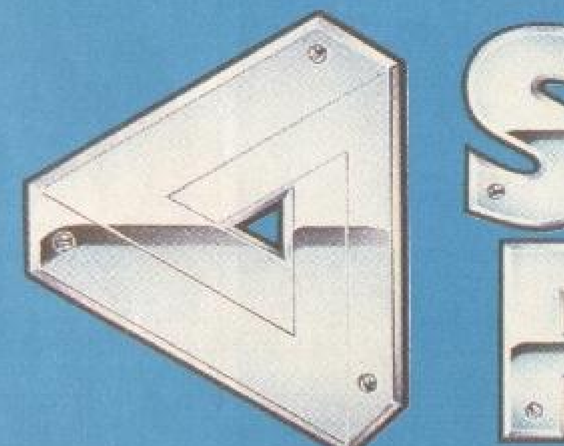
MANIC MINER







Miner Willy, while prospecting down Surbiton way stumbles upon an ancient, long forgotten mineshaft. On further exploration, he finds evidence of a lost civilisation far superior to our own, which used automatons to dig deep into the Earth's core to supply the essential raw materials for their advanced industry. After centuries of peace and prosperity, the civilisation was torn apart by war, and lapsed into a long dark age, abandoning their industry and machines. Nobody, however, thought to tell the mine robots to stop working, and through countless aeons they had steadily accumulated a huge stockpile of valuable metals and minerals, and Miner Willy realises that he now has the opportunity to make his fortune by finding the underground store. In order to move to the next chamber, you must collect all the flashing keys in the room while avoiding nasties like Poisonous Pansies and Spiders and Slime and worst of all, Manic Mining Robots. When you have all the keys, you can enter the portal which will now be flashing. The game ends when you have been 'got' or fallen heavily three times.



MANIC MINER is available on Spectrum, Amstrad, BBC, Dragon, CBM 64, Oric/Atmos, MSX.

The above screens are from the BBC version.

SOFTWARE PROJECTS

Software Projects Limited, Bearbrand Complex, Allerton Road, Woolton, Liverpool L25 7SF. Telephone: 051-428 9393 (4 lines). Telex: 627520.

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The March issue of PCG is due out Thursday, February 14. Just 75p!

BRITAIN'S MEANEST PLAYER

For months the battle has been on among the nation's greatest gamesters, all trying to prove their talent and win our model of the hideous Vivian. Now the time has come.

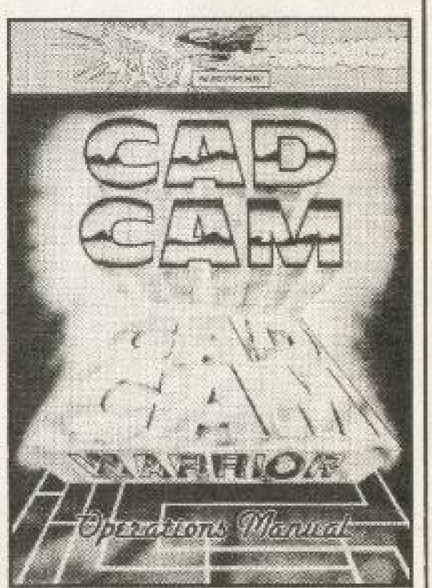
Our nominations for the title of meanest player have been summoned to PCG's Challenge Chamber from the far corners of the land. There they will take part in one of the most pulsating shoot-outs of all time. Anything could happen.

Read the Chamber Master's graphic account of this unique event in the March PCG.

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There's the remarkable *Cad Cam Warrior* with 8,000 screens, on the '64. But is it compulsive?

There's Ocean's new football game on the Spectrum. But is it playable?

There's an intriguing release on the Beeb from new company Viper. But will it hold your interest?

The verdicts that count await your attention in March's PCG.

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Are you one of the Vic owners waiting to find out if you've won a copy of *Perils of Willy*?

We're planning to print the names of all the winners in the next issue. Only another month and a prize could be on its way!

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